

"IT WAS LIKE THE GAUNTLET WAS THROWN DOWN:"

THE NO! TO APEC STORY.

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## **Abstract**

Ad hoc social movement coalitions are made up of diverse groups that come together to maximise the use of limited resources. Once formed, they face a dilemma. Coalition logic holds that given the limited time frame and instrumental objectives of the organisation, resources should be disproportionately invested in the visible sphere of action. However, this instrumental emphasis ignores the need to invest resources in the 'submerged' sphere of membership intercommunication. As a result tensions which have their root in divergent ideologies, traditions and histories of resistance can threaten the coalition's collective identity.

This thesis is about one such organisation, the No! To APEC (NTA) coalition, one of three groups that made up the movement to oppose the APEC Economic Leader's Meeting in Vancouver held in November 1997. NTA, made up of small left-wing grassroots groups, built a campaign around resistance to "imperialist globalisation." It organised community education, an international conference and a march and rally. Although it succeeded in meeting its objectives, a fracture occurred between the largest and most consolidated member group and the other unconsolidated grouping made up of individuals and representatives of small organisations. The fracture caused a disconnection between the local and the international priorities set by the organisation at its outset. In this study I examine the process that led to this outcome. In particular I identify the importance of establishing a capacity for reflexively monitoring the actions and interactions of members. While consensus is not a pre-requisite for solidarity, disputes arising from different perspectives and

membership tactics may jeopardise organisational unity. Providing a limited space for evaluating conflicting validity claims and organisational dynamics may help to preserve unity during the active phase of a coalition's mobilisation. The methods used to obtain data for this study were participant observation and interviewing. I spent six months as an activist-researcher with the coalition and I interviewed activists from the three main APEC opposition groups.

<sup>3</sup> Although the main focus of this study is on the political and organisational evolution of the NTA coalition, I broaden the discussion to argue that ad hoc coalitions play an important role in generating 'social capital' or 'social movement connectivity.' Social solidarity generated in the course of short-term political action increases the potential for further action mobilisation in social movement networks and communities. In the final part of the thesis I review literature on globalisation and social movements. Combined with what has been learned about coalitions in the previous chapters, this exercise provides a context for examining the APEC opposition movement and, by extension, the prospects for building transnational movements and a counter-hegemonic historical bloc against imperialist globalisation.



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## **Part one: Chapters 1- 3.**

Part one of this thesis contains three chapters: an introduction, a literature review and a chapter on research methodology.

### ***Chapter 1: Introduction.***

*"It was like the gauntlet was thrown down when you found out that APEC was being hosted by Vancouver." (NTA activist)*

Events surrounding the anti-Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) of November 1997 in Vancouver have become notorious. APEC is associated with the RCMP's violent suppression of dissent at the University of British Columbia's campus where the APEC Economic Leader's Meeting (AELM) took place. This act, the details of which are still being investigated at a public enquiry, was the most dramatic event of that period. As a result, the significance of many other events that took place during the AELM has become obscured. In fact, the groundswell of opposition to APEC went far beyond the demonstration held at UBC. Two other demonstrations involving thousands of protesters and two international conferences took place preceding, and on the day of, the UBC protest. In the year before the AELM a great deal of organising and community education had occurred in what, for the purposes of this study, I will call the *APEC Opposition Movement*.<sup>1</sup> The year of preparation culminated in a loud outpouring of protest in the streets of Vancouver. While not substantially changing the course of

the APEC process, the protests created a public relations disaster for the Canadian government.<sup>2</sup>

APEC is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1989 and made up of 17 Pacific rim nations. Through a series of ministerial forums, international business engagements and an annual leaders' meeting, the objective of APEC is to create a free trade agreement in the Pacific region. Canada's participation in APEC is consistent with the free trade policies of successive governments starting with the election of prime minister Brian Mulroney's Conservatives in 1984. The re-election of the Tories in 1988 followed by the elections of the Liberal Party headed by prime minister Jean Chretien in 1992 and 1996 marked a continuing commitment to free trade by Canada's two main political parties. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) passed into legislation in 1988 and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) passed in 1994. Canada's participation in negotiating the World Trade Organisation's Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) from 1996 onwards is another indicator of the government's trade liberalisation agenda. This agenda is part of the resurgence of neo-liberal philosophy and policy-making that has dominated governance in industrialised nations since the alleged failure in the 1970's of the Fordist Keynesian welfare state (KWS).

The KWS failed to perform adequately as a strategy of capital accumulation. Neo-liberalism, which enshrines free-market ideology in the practice of global capitalist restructuring can be viewed as a response to the crisis created by its failure.

'Globalisation,' as it has come to be known, has a number of features. First, the internationalisation of capital and the dependence of national economies on export markets accompany changes in production that affect the global wage relation. These

changes are as follows: the proletarianisation of labour in the third world and the introduction of 'flexible' labour practices in the first world. The automation of production and communication has created high levels of unemployment in the advanced capitalist nations of the North. In the South, where corporate capital in search of cheap labour has increasingly shifted its production, oligarchic ruling cliques subjugate an impoverished but disciplined work-force (predominantly female), often in specially designated 'free trade zones.' Those not employed in the productive sectors of capital or in the administration of the state are subject to insecurity and marginalisation in both the first and third worlds. Second, while those affected by unemployment in the North have some measure of state social welfare to ameliorate their suffering, government policies of fiscal restraint erode the 'social safety net' that sustains them. Countries of the South have enforced similar policies as part of 'structural adjustment programs' imposed by international debt restructuring bodies such as the IMF. Third, policies of fiscal restraint in first world countries indicate a changing role of the state in its relation to civil society and to the economy.

There is a great deal of controversy among scholars about the nature of these changes. Some authors argue that in the era of globalisation, the ability of the state to influence or steer the economic affairs of the nation has been superseded by the actions of transnational corporate capital and finance capital (Teeple 1995, Hirsch 1997). These authors argue that governments, needing to attract international capital investment, abandon policies aimed at offsetting the negative consequences of capitalist industrialisation and the operation of the market-place. The state, abdicating its responsibility to protect the social security of its more vulnerable citizens also

relinquishes its role of promoting stability through social solidarity. Instead, the state's facility for social control supplements the discipline of the market place. This transformation is consistent with the neo-liberal agenda forwarded by corporate capital - an agenda that results in a net restriction of "social sovereignty" conferred upon the citizenry and a diminishment of democracy. Others argue that the effect of globalisation upon state sovereignty is at best ambiguous. For example, Mann (1997) argues that the retention of sovereignty by the state depends on the nation's economic position relative to others in the global economy. Haslam (1999) argues that while the sovereignty of the state has eroded in some of the respects pointed out by the 'corporate agenda' theorists, it remains the seat of hegemonic power. He writes, 'There remains a great deal of opportunity for states to strengthen their authority through the manipulation of national cultures and individual values' (p.64). While there is ongoing disagreement about sovereignty and role of the state in the globalised economy, none of these critical scholars argues that neo-liberal restructuring has *increased* opportunities for the exercise of democracy. Rather, their disputes concern questions of how the exercise of democracy has been transformed or declined as a result of changes in the productive forces and social relations of production.

The anti-APEC opposition movement was not a unified or cohesive force, and the three main groups involved reflect the different traditions, ideologies and expressions of dissent within it; however, if there was a concern common to all of those who protested, it was the question of democracy. The APEC process, devoid of public scrutiny, confined to the control of government and capital, epitomises the fundamental lack of democracy involved in globalisation. Protesters viewed the three pillars of neo-



liberal restructuring --trade liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation-- as having wrought destructive changes to Canadian society and to the rest of the world. The literature of the anti-APEC social movement organisations unequivocally argues that 1. APEC will accelerate the process of globalisation that concentrates wealth and power in the hands of fewer individuals and families in Canada, and worldwide, and 2. APEC will hurt those already disadvantaged by the global economic system. The organisations that came to Vancouver from within Canada and from the Pacific nations came together for one reason. This was to organise those most injuriously affected by globalisation to pursue their interests and destinies swimming against the tide of neo-liberal restructuring. A fundamental split occurred between those organisations that grouped under the banner of social democracy demanding reform of APEC, and those who argued for the defeat of APEC including some who argued for the abolition of capitalism.

The following thesis examines a coalition of groups that fell into the latter category. No To APEC! (No To Anti-People Economic Control, or NTA) was one of three main groups that made up the APEC opposition movement in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia in the year preceding the AELM. The other two groups were called the Peoples' Summit (PS) and APEC Alert (AA).<sup>3</sup> AA, made up largely of students, formed on the campus of the University of British Columbia (UBC). The PS consisted of national and international NGO's, unions, established left and progressive groups and represented itself as a 'parallel summit' to the AELM. The Canadian Labour Congress was its main sponsor. By contrast, NTA was a coalition made up of resource-poor grassroots and small left organisations drawn mainly from the social

movement networks of East Vancouver. It formed in 1996 and was in existence for 18 months. During that time it conducted public workshops on APEC, “networked” with other social movement organisations, held three conferences and organised several demonstrations against APEC.

As a graduate student I studied the literature on social movements. The appearance of local opposition to APEC gave me the chance to apply the various theoretical approaches to a historical event. In particular, I had read a great deal of Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT), and was disappointed by it. The economic slant of RMT did not resonate with the richness of my experience as an activist, first with the peace movement and later with the anti-poverty movement. Should recruitment to activism be reduced to a question of rational choice? Should the success or failure of a movement be understood simply in terms of the resources available to it? I wanted to investigate these questions by applying this newly discovered framework to the experience of being present within a social movement organisation. While I was completing my MA course-work, the federal government announced that the AELM would be held at UBC. The announcement presented me with an opportunity to be involved in one of the groups that had started to organise against it. Why did I choose NTA?

I was curious why there were two rival organisations opposing APEC --the PS and NTA (AA was in its infancy at that point). I therefore approached both with the intention of conducting a comparative study of the two social movement organisations (SMOs); however, with limited resources I was unable to carry out a project on this scale. I decided, instead, to get to know one organisation well rather than two

superficially. I chose NTA for one reason only --it felt more familiar. Although as a union steward I worked within a well-resourced bureaucratic social-movement-like organisation, grassroots organisations had provided my most interesting experiences. These experiences included being involved in direct action campaigns, putting out a community radio show and organising street theatre. I attended a one day workshop put on by NTA at the Philippine Women Centre (otherwise known as the Kalayaan Centre) called 'What the Heck is APEC?' During the workshop the organisers encouraged me, as part of an exercise, to sing an operatic aria against APEC. Despite feeling embarrassed I complied with the request, much to the mirth of the other participants. This event signalled to me an unconventional and theatrical aspect of activism that seemed to contradict the arid 'political- scientific' depiction of social movements in RMT. The dedication, enthusiasm and humour of the organisers impressed me. I approached one of the organisers after the workshop to see whether NTA would be willing to have me along as a resident ethnographer. The answer was maybe. I wrote a letter outlining my intentions and continued to attend meetings so that people could get to know me (Chapter 3 describes my research relationship with NTA). Eventually my proposal was accepted.

The Philippine Women Centre (PWC) served as the headquarters of NTA. NTA's day-to-day administration took place there and volunteers associated with the centre spent long hours carrying out tasks such as dealing with media enquiries, office duties and newsletter formatting. Committee meetings and workshops also took place at the centre. Groups associated with the centre formed the core of the coalition but half of the regular volunteers came from coalition member groups outside of the centre. The

year and a half campaign demanded a high level of work output as well as meticulous planning and coordination. In the six months that I was with the coalition I contributed a great deal of time and energy to the tasks at hand. This level of involvement put me in contact with the other activists in the coalition. Such contact also allowed me to observe the tensions and challenges faced by the organisation. From this vantage point, I observed the coalition's attempts to maintain unity and progress (often in very difficult circumstances) towards its goals.

This story is about how NTA came together, the actions of its members and the consequences of their actions which led to divisions within the coalition. A key concept used in this study to explain what brings people and groups into the same social movement organisation is *collective identity*. The members of NTA saw their organisation as different from other organisations opposing APEC. Collective perception of these differences formed the foundation of the coalition's *collective identity*. What created division was a weakening of the coalition's collective 'action system.' According to Melluci (1989) a movement's collective identity is more than a signifier of what distinguishes it from other movements or actors in what Klandermans (1992) calls the 'multiorganisational field' of social movement action. Collective identity is a socially constructed system that traverses the life of the movement (or in the case of NTA, the movement organisation). Melluci claims that the movement's shared definition of itself is never stable but involves constant debate within the movement's 'submerged networks.' This debate typically is about the ends of its actions, the means to those ends and the relationship of the movement to its environment. Thus, the dilemmas that face movements and movement organisations, for example debates over

strategy and tactics, means and ends, are articulations of the action system at work in the construction of collective identity. The idea of collective identity therefore implies the existence of an instituted structure to reflexively monitor the internal and external affairs of the movement as it forms and pursues its objectives. NTA's action system, as it turned out, did not adequately monitor its own internal environment or adequately address the tensions and strains that were part of that environment.

Coalitions are subject to the centripetal political forces necessary to maintain unity and by the centrifugal forces of their members' independent action. Coalitions are inherently unstable. Short-term, grassroots ad hoc coalitions like NTA are particularly vulnerable to disintegration. They have a hard time promoting 'co-operative differentiation' among their members (Hathway and Mayer 1993). The story of NTA illustrates the dilemma faced by coalitions. Its members came together for an instrumental purpose. This purpose can be described in terms of a *coalition logic*.

Coalitions are instrumental: by combining with other organisations, members maximise the effective use of their resources (Diani 1992). However, the temporary nature of the campaign and the limited material and human resources available to such a SMO can accent this instrumentality to the detriment of its members' solidarity. Achieving a balance between the need for group unity while respecting the independent priorities of the coalition members (co-operative differentiation) requires a mechanism for reflexively monitoring the organisation's internal relations. Without internal reflexive monitoring the potential for division is greater --but establishing and operating a mechanism to achieve organisational oversight drains resources from precious reserves of time and volunteer labour power. As a coalition directs its resources towards the

arena of visible action, holding demonstrations, staging media events and so on, it runs the risk of short-changing the submerged networks of its membership. Without a minimal reflexive forum to address conflicting or competing member goals, the action system has no means of recognising this problem thereby hampering organisational unity. This was a central problem in the development of the NTA coalition.

Thus far, the resource based model of social movement theorising is vindicated; after all, coalition logic is all about the use of resources. However, it only provides a framework on which the complexity of social interaction within the coalition rests --the question of resource deployment as such, was never made public within NTA. There was never, to my knowledge, a debate about the application of resources either to external ends or to maintaining internal unity. If anything, there was a tacit agreement to avoid discussing internal unity. To have done so may have exposed the precariousness of the coalition's unity --exacerbating the problem rather than solving it. Nevertheless, even if the use of resources did not come up during formal internal debate, resources were discussed and deployed in strategic ways on an everyday basis. This study reveals that, without an adequate mechanism for monitoring the internal affairs of the organisation, member goals, priorities and what I call 'core allegiances' (personal and group attachments to fundamental beliefs, ideologies, and traditions) will decide the fate of the organisation. These elements, imported into the coalition by its members, decide indirectly, covertly and tactically and through competition with each other, the use of resources and consequently the direction and action outcomes of the organisation. Therefore, the concepts of collective identity, reflexive monitoring and resource allocation are central to this study. Of equal importance is the context in

which these processes took place. Two elements were crucial in contributing to this context: one was the differential consolidation of the two main groupings within the organisation; the other was the different expectations within the organisation about what a coalition is capable of achieving.

This study attempts to 'get inside' the evolution of the coalition as it moved towards its objectives. From data gathered as a participant observer and from interviews obtained from coalition activists, I was able to get a sense of the issues that emerged as people and groups interacted with each other. I also observed the process that resulted when people and groups encountered the formal structure set up to govern the coalition's operation. The coalition's structure, its rules and resources (Giddens 1984) became an essential part of the story. NTA's rules, its formal basis of unity (its constitution) and resources, its committee system, material assets and volunteers, became appealed to, enlisted, interpreted, transformed or entrenched by various groups and individuals towards realising the objectives of the organisation.

The two main objectives of NTA, local organising and the holding of an international conference, took place but sparked division within the coalition. The structure of the coalition, used strategically by the different coalition members and groupings, precipitated the division between local and international priorities. The division occurred along fractures formed by the members' 'core allegiances'. Culturally focused coalition studies mentioned in the literature review point out the obstacles to unity posed by such political and cultural differences among members. I argue that the lack of a formally instituted mechanism to reflexively monitor the consequences of the actions and interactions of NTA's membership strengthened the division. Because there

was no public exposure of the causes of the tensions, each side attempted to find explanations for the unsatisfactory practices or actions of the other. In reality, the practices and actions of one side were often responses to the practices and actions of the other. The actions taken were local and contingent in origin and were not driven by the other side's ideological or political orientations. This is not to suggest that the 'other side' did not have ideological or political orientations --indeed there existed core allegiances that defined the overall goals or direction of the two main groupings. However, the existence of these goals does not fully explain the practices and tactical actions used to achieve them. I argue that the coalition members' action is better understood as a response to the conditions that they directly encountered within NTA rather than as organisational behaviour driven by their ideologies and beliefs. Nevertheless, that such causal power was attributed by one side to the core allegiances of the other side, speaks volumes to the way in which group perceptions can create division.

Without an instituted means within the action system for addressing the tensions that arose in the coalition, NTA's collective identity, its unity, became weakened. By the end of the coalition some members of the 'non-centre' (non-PWC) group had become less convinced of the rigid distinction between the political positioning of NTA and that of the PS. Despite the tensions and the organisation's eroded collective identity it stayed together; even the most dissatisfied did not leave because, as they testified, there was no other alternative to NTA. The coalition represented the only explicitly revolutionary voice of the left within the APEC opposition movement. This is an



important point. For small radical grassroots left organisations a coalition offers the only feasible means to organise protest on a significant scale.

By contrast, mainstream left and progressive organisations have access to greater resources and can pull together a more media-intensive event without having to rely on volunteer labour and community networking to the same degree as grassroots groups.

The PS was an ad hoc coalition in as much as it was a confluence of different movement organisations; however, the members of the coalition did very little community organising together and at the summit, they remained confined to individual movement 'issue forums.' By contrast, NTA organisations interacted with each other on a daily basis and carried out a great deal of community outreach, education and recruitment in the months preceding the campaign's final events. This contrast illustrates the importance to radical left organisations of coalition work and demonstrates that such work is a necessary congealing of the submerged intersecting networks of contemporary movements. In this thesis I will argue, following Diani (1997), that movements and movement organisations generate social capital -social bonds- that returns to the networks from which the coalition emerged. Therefore, although Peterson (1997) describes such ad hoc coalitions where grassroots sect-like political groups join forces as 'temporary belief spaces' that are by their nature ephemeral, they are nonetheless important way-stations for nurturing oppositional culture. For this reason, I argue that ad hoc grassroots coalitions should, resources permitting, devote some time and energy to discussing and working out tensions. Only by taking this course of action can co-operative differentiation be achieved. This exercise will enhance and enrich the flow of

social movement solidarity and knowledge to the social movement networks, without which no opposition to structures of oppression are possible.

A large part of this thesis constructs an understanding of NTA as an organisational process. A key concept used so far --collective identity-- is essentially a cultural phenomenon; however, by describing solidarity as an 'action system,' its application to the field of study incorporates elements of resource mobilisation. Much of what I have so far described about NTA resides within the RMT paradigm; after all, the lack of resources available to NTA and the deployment of those resources are factors interwoven with the complex social processes that took place. Indeed there are very few aspects of mobilisation, even ideological orientation (Downey 1988), that cannot be expressed as problems of resource deployment. However, this kind of reductionism leaves the reader searching for some historical context within which to place social movements and SMOs. New Social Movement (NSM) theory is a counter-balance to the purposive-rational limitations of RMT. With its emphasis on culture, macro-structural and historical features of contemporary movements, NSM theorists offer a critical theory of current political developments. They link these developments to the appearance of the movements.

New social movement theory sets out to explain the emergence of movements that demonstrate a departure from the traditional labour movement: the women's movement, the civil rights movement and the peace and environmental movements. There is little unanimity of opinion about this emergence among NSM theorists; however, some generalisation is possible. New social movements (NSMs) represent a 'proliferation of antagonisms' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) released by resistance to the

regulative state and corporatism of Fordist mass production (Hirsch 1988), to commodified mass society (Marcuse 1963), post-industrial society (Touraine 1977), or complex society (Melluci 1989). Class relation is no longer the only site of antagonism, patriarchy, white supremacy, heterosexism, militarism and anthropocentrism form other sites of antagonism. Consistent with this departure from working class struggle is a new political agent --the new middle class, or service class, made up of disaffected members of state bureaucracies. Other constituents include those most affected by state regulation, women, students and the marginalised. Furthermore, NSMs demonstrate a break with the worker's movement in as much as agency includes a valuation of individualised activism where the meeting of personal needs is as important as the meeting of collective needs. Melluci concludes that, 'the freedom from needs is replaced by freedom of needs' (Melluci 1989:177). Consistent with this politics are new themes of political expression --a politics of affirming identity in the recognition of groups subordinated by reason of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation. This politics stands out in contrast to the left's traditional class politics of redistribution (Fraser 1995). Finally, NSM politics take novel forms. NSM action tends to be expressive, cultural and symbolic, exposing and de-legitimising the supposed impartiality of technological, legal and policy measures taken by governments and private interests. Above all, NSMs promote equality and democracy. This radical democratic discourse shows up as a dramatic contrast to the hierarchical and often bureaucratic practices of the worker's movement. Internally, NSMs practice 'pre-figurative,' (Breines 1982) self-educating and co-operative processes of organisation (Touraine 1992).

NSM theory is not counterpoised to RMT, and a number of writers (for example Klandermans and Tarrow 1988) have found ways to combine the cultural emphasis of the former with the organisational emphasis of the latter. However, NSM theory is different from RMT in that it looks at social movements at a different level of theorising --it tends to be abstract, macro-theoretical and sensitising in contrast to the empirically based middle-range theorising of RMT. An important argument of my thesis is that NTA and the APEC opposition movement cannot be understood without moving to the NSM/political economy level of abstraction. NTA, although largely inspired by a traditional redistributive politics, showed many of the features of NSMs. Groups and individuals who were --or had been-- involved in NSMs were present in the coalition. Issues specific to women, students and to the environment were part of the coalition's message. These messages were often delivered in NTA's workshops with a variety of innovative cultural devices such as theatre. The coalition members incorporated this diversity of interests and practices into the organisation, although controversy emerged about how to deal with tensions caused by the proximity of different perspectives. The most prominent area of contention within the coalition was the question of democracy, particularly about decision-making and authority. While these issues have been debated within revolutionary socialist and other left groups for decades prior to the appearance of NSMs, the accent on grassroots radical democracy, particularly the superiority of consensus and participatory democracy over hierarchy or 'vanguardist' politics, is a hallmark of resurgent movements of the 'new left' (Brienes 1982), particularly the women's movement (Flacks 1995: 254). Controversy over decision-making process and undue concentrations of power within the coalition reflect an organisational

sensitivity to issues of democracy brought into focus by grassroots politics of the post-war era (in particular see accounts of direct-action oriented groups, for example, Sturgeon 1995).

Thus, NTA had many features of a NSM. Likewise, the PS and AA. The PS was a congerie of NSMs converging with the 'old' labour movement. What makes the APEC opposition interesting is that it appeared to frame contemporary movement concerns into a critical political economy of globalisation. The appearance of this opposition calls into question the distinction between old and new social movements. If, as argued by Hirsch (1988), NSMs are the progeny of Fordism, and, as such, they signify opposition that cannot be reduced to a fundamental antagonism between capital and labour (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), the APEC opposition, with its critique of neo-liberal hegemony, offers an example of how different movements can frame the problems faced by their constituencies into questions of capitalist exploitation and expropriation. In other words, issues of identity, militarism and environmental destruction are as conducive to opposing capital<sup>4</sup> as are issues related to class. This point is confirmed by recent events in Seattle where a broad opposition to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) succeeded in disrupting the organisation's latest 'round.'

All of those that I interviewed spoke of globalisation sharpening social inequality in all of its manifestations. How to organise a unified opposition to particular sites of deepening inequality in an internally coherent way is the major challenge of our era. While any opposition to globalised capitalism is inconceivable simply as a politics of class, such a politics cannot be removed from the picture by substituting, for example, a politics of recognition and identity in its place. Any opposition movement

acting to end encroachments made by neo-liberal restructuring must be multi-dimensional and, ideally, multi or transnational.

This touches on another key area of contention within NTA --the difficulties of starting a dialogue between progressive social movement sectors of North and South. The literature reviewed on globalisation suggests that local and national conditions will prevail in determining the shape of social movement activity. This is the case despite the supposed transnationality of global communications and the loss of state sovereignty declared by some writers to be an effect of globalising capital. Because capital, the driving force behind globalisation, operates differently in different localities, there is no 'one-size fits all' foundation on which to build an international or transnational movement. This does not mean an abandonment of attempts to build cross-movement and international contacts between movements; the anti-APEC events offered important lessons in the possibilities and obstacles to making such contacts.

I end this section with a reflection on my time with NTA. Gaining access to a site of study can be problematic for ethnographers. I had no problems gaining access to the NTA coalition --however, there was a sort of quid pro quo involved. After receiving no reply to my proposal for conducting a study with NTA, I was concerned that I had not been accepted. As it turned out, my letter had inadvertently been set aside. At one monthly whole coalition meeting in July, an activist asked the following question, "How many people here can say definitely that they will be around in the next months leading up to the APEC event?" Most of those present in a room of about twenty-five people put up their hands. I asked to speak and I stated that I had sent in a proposal to the coordinating committee to which I had not received a reply. I then stated that I could only

stay working at NTA if the organisation accepted my research proposal. This condition was in no way a bribe. It was a realistic assessment, that, given the restraints on my thesis writing time, I would have to find another field of research if I could not research NTA. I also used the occasion to make a public pitch for doing the research. I declared my political biases and said that my research would be an historical record of the coalition. I outlined the methodology, participant observation and interviewing, and asked anyone, at any time, to approach me if they had questions about the research. The following day I received a phone-call from a member of the coordinating committee giving me the go-ahead. I would make a guess that three elements contributed to my acceptance. First people had seen me around for a month or so. They knew that I was a hard worker and that I could get along well with others. Second, they needed my volunteer labour, and third there was some interest in my research --which is not surprising in an organisation that valued education highly. I have gained immeasurably towards advancing my academic goals by being able to conduct research at NTA. I feel satisfied that the work that I contributed to the coalition campaign and the finished work that I will give to those who participated, is adequate compensation. I sincerely hope that the results of this research will be of use to those who were part of the NTA experience.

Nevertheless, I do have some concerns. Much of this material is sensitive --after all it documents tensions and divisions within a social movement organisation as it underwent an often stressful campaign. I tried to be as balanced as possible in describing and analysing the internal dynamics of the coalition. I was therefore relieved that most of the feedback that I received from those to whom I distributed the findings

was an endorsement of the present version. However, I am aware that doing this type of in-depth work contains hazards that may have negative consequences for social movement communities -exacerbating, rather than resolving, existing tensions. On the other hand, the opposite may also be true. Groups and individuals mostly act according to the conditions that they confront rarely for nefarious reasons or underhanded motives.<sup>5</sup> Providing a plausible explanation of how people make decisions and act can be the basis for rebuilding trust in a community. I hope that this is the legacy of the study that follows.

I am not alone in having qualms about this research. The UBC ethics committee sent me a letter turning down my research proposal because I might be investigating a situation where illegal activity could take place. The committee asked for reassurance that this was not so. My thesis advisor protested and defended my case to the committee.<sup>6</sup> The committee allowed me to continue my research. Preceding my application to the ethics committee, there had been an active anti-APEC campaign on the UBC campus where police and students had been in conflict for some time. The dismissal of the application likely demonstrated the anxiety that existed in the UBC administration at the time of the APEC protests. It also demonstrates the fragility of academic freedom when the university establishment appears to run scared or does not wish to support controversial research --perhaps for fear of offending funding sources (Ratner and Arnold 1983). While I can only speculate the motives behind the ethics committee's actions, this case does raise concerns about the use of ethical guidelines for gatekeeping purposes.



## **Chapter Guide**

### **Part one**

Chapter 1: Introduction pp. 1-26.

Chapter 2: Literature Review pp 27-76.

The literature on social movements is extensive. In the 1950's and 1960's, sociologists in the school of structural-functionalism conceived of social movements as evidence of collective irrationality occurring at times of societal change. In the 1970's resource mobilisation theory (RMT) challenged this idea by arguing that social movement action was rational. Theorists in this school claim that insurgencies such as the civil rights movement are 'politics by other means,' and that polity challengers, no less than polity members, rely on opportunities and resources to seek political power. New social movement theory (NSMT) connects forms of social movement activity that originated in the 1960's to historical factors. It focuses on the cultural aspects of protest that characterise movements such as the women's and environmental movements. In this chapter I will outline and contrast these theories as well as examine the small literature on social movement coalitions.

Chapter 3: Methodology pp. 84-106

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the study of No To APEC. I will describe how I collected, processed and analysed the field and interview data. The "grounded theoretical" framework that I used pays special attention to the relationship between process and structure in social settings. In this chapter I will

present my rationale for dividing the campaign findings into two parts: 1. the perspective of the 'centre group' and 2. the perspective of the 'non-centre group.'

## **Part 2 Findings**

### **Chapter 4: No To APEC's History and Collective Identity pp.108-145**

The first ten pages of this chapter describe the coalition's history. This includes a short overview of APEC, the key role played by the PWC in the coalition and the significance of the 1996 People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation (PCAIG) in the Philippines. Also included is a description of the coalition's committees, meetings and activities. The second part of the chapter describes what served as a basis of collaboration for the organisation's members: the organisation's 'collective identity.' This identity distinguished NTA from other actors in the "multiorganisational field" of activism. I will use testimony from NTA activists to arrive at conclusions about this identity, as well as some views expressed by members of the People's Summit to assess how NTA was viewed by other organisations.

### **Chapter 5: Campaign Perspectives of the Centre Group pp.146-170**

Chapters 5 and 6 will look at the campaign perspectives of the centre and non-centre groups. These perspectives include the goals and organising conditions of each group as these were defined by the members of the groups. I describe the actions of each group as a set of strategic responses to the conditions that they encountered. The centre group made up the core of the coalition. Its members wanted to introduce an anti-imperialist and third world perspective to the British Columbia lower mainland's

APEC opposition movement. Also, they wanted to see these perspectives reflected in the 1997 PCAIG. They were concerned about weaknesses in the coalition's resources and political stability and took certain actions such as adopting a leadership role and working hard to compensate for these weaknesses.

Chapter 6: Campaign Perspectives of the Non-Centre Group, pp.171-198.

The non-centre group came from a number of political groups and ideologies. They wanted to build a strong network of resistance to APEC in the B.C. lower mainland. Some members hoped initially that the coalition would become the nucleus for local anti-imperialist organising beyond the APEC event. They disapproved of what they perceived to be undemocratic practices in the coalition and the role played by the centre group in these practices. Members of the non-centre group responded to these circumstances in two ways: reducing their involvement in the coalition for long or short periods of time; setting aside their concerns and becoming focused on their work in the committees.

Chapter 7: MOB, CoCo and No To APEC's Final Act, pp.199-206.

This short chapter describes the division that occurred within the coalition. The division came about as a result of tensions between the two main coalition groupings. In particular, tension arose between two of the coalition's committees which developed into a separation of NTA's goal of combining local and international perspectives in a single campaign.

## Chapter 8: Discussion of the Findings and Conclusions, pp 207-229.

In this chapter I examine analytically the processes that took place in NTA. In the first part of the chapter I link the actions taken by coalition members to the consequences of their actions. These consequences, including the bifurcation of the coalition's priorities, arose as the result of a series of actions and reactions between the two main groupings in the coalition. I show the part played in this process by the perceptions and assumptions that one side had of the other. In the second part of the chapter I look at three, what I call, 'subplots' that were active in the evolution of the coalition. These subplots were: 1. *structure and process*, the elements of which were the lack of effective organisational reflexivity in the operation of the coalition, the presence of one consolidated group and the emergence of a competing nexus of power; 2. *core allegiances* that provide the direction and impetus for actions, if not explaining the strategic aspect of the actions themselves; 3. *defining coalition*, or how the expectations of coalitions held by different parties influenced NTA's organisational dynamics.

### **Part 3**

## Chapter 9: Collective Identity, Reflexivity and the Temporary Belief Space pp. 234-257.

Central to this chapter are two key concepts, collective identity and structuration. Collective identity is more than a signifier of what sets a movement, or movement organisation, apart from other movements or organisations. It is an 'action system' or collective process that attempts to achieve solidarity by linking a movement's means and ends to the field of action in which it operates. This system implies that movements

and SMOs have some capacity to reflexively monitor their progress, not just before embarking on action, but during the period of action. With reference to the work of A. Giddens, I will examine closely the importance of reflexive monitoring to the 'ongoingness' of organisational systems. This discussion will enlarge on the analytical framework provided by grounded theory, referring to the 'sub-plots' mentioned in the previous chapter. I will explain why reflexive monitoring was unsuccessful during the life of the coalition --and why NTA's collective identity remained fragile. I conclude that some degree of reflexive monitoring is necessary for system integration in coalitions. The degree required depends on the resources available and on the political advisability for having such a mechanism.

#### Chapter 10: Social Movement Community: the Struggle Continues, pp. 258-267

This chapter reinforces the argument for maintaining solidarity in ad hoc coalitions. However temporary or instrumental their aims, they are close to the social movement networks from which they arise and to which they return. I examine the literature on social movement networks and argue that the 'social capital' accruing to these networks is dependent on the solidarity obtained during the existence of a coalition. Even if the resulting residue of solidarity is marginal, the knowledge gained by members from their experience of coalition work is nevertheless a valuable contribution to promoting further mobilisation.

Chapter 11: The APEC Opposition Movement and Global Contention, pp.268-312.

NTA was part of a larger movement that opposed APEC. That movement included political and ideological divisions and tensions between different movements as well as tensions between perspectives of North and South. In this chapter I look at that movement, presenting it as a 'snapshot' of the state of social movement mobilisation in our present time. To do this I start out with a discussion of the controversies surrounding the topic of globalisation. I look at some of the problems confronting social movement organisers faced with the prospect of initiating a dialogue between groups situated differently by the process of globalisation. I look in detail at the lessons learned from the conferences held by NTA and by the PS in terms of the success each had in promoting "international solidarity." In the last section, with reference to the work of Antonio Gramsci, I look at the possibilities for building an international or transnational counter-hegemonic 'historical bloc.'

Chapter 12: Conclusions, pp. 313-324.

This chapter pulls together the various threads of the thesis. Considering the experience of NTA, I arrive at some tentative suggestions for building and maintaining successful ad hoc coalitions. I provide a commentary on networking and apply the insights of NSM theory and RM theory to an understanding of NTA.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review: Social Movements and Coalitions.**

Scholarly work on social movements has grown exponentially since the 1960's. The dominant paradigm in this area is Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) and its variant, the Political Process model. A recent addition to social movement theorising is what has become known as 'New Social Movement Theory' (NSMT). Research on social movement coalitions is sparse and most often appears within the framework of RMT; however, there are studies that fit a culturally oriented approach and others that explore the philosophical implications of different groups working together in an emancipatory project. There are also a few studies written within the political economy tradition.

RMT marked a significant development in social movement research. The traditional functionalist perspective maintained that collective behaviour arose from structural change and was essentially irrational:

...strain at this level of the system (the system of behavioural control) is manifested by a series of symptoms of disturbance showing the psychological marks of irrationality. These will be organized along the major axis of hope and fear of wishful thinking and anxiety showing unrealistic trends in both respects ...There will be fantasies of utopian ideal future states, of idealized past states, of security in a status quo from which sources of disturbance would conveniently be banished....These motivational components are common to all symptoms of disturbance in the institutionalization of social structures (Parsons *Theories of Society* 1961 quoted in Oberschall 1973).

The political turmoil of the 1960's and early 1970's caused sociologists in the United States to question the assumption that social deviance and psychological irrationality are symptomatic of social change. If anything, they reversed this analysis

by stating that collective behaviour was itself the cause of social change, and furthermore, that it was as rational as any other type of political behaviour.

Early RMT researchers (McCarthy and Zald 1973; 1977, Oberschall 1973) based their approach on the rational choice model of Mancur Olson (1965). Olson observed that in an economic system individuals would not be willing to curb spending voluntarily to prevent inflation if they could benefit from price stability achieved by others,

...the rational individual in the large group in the socio-political context will not be willing to make any sacrifices to achieve the objectives he shares with others. There is accordingly no presumption that large groups will organize to act in their common interest. Only when groups are small, or when they are fortunate enough to have an independent source of selective incentives, will they organize to achieve their objectives (Olson, 1965: 166).

The utilitarian logic of this argument implies that individuals will choose to 'ride free' if they perceive that others are working for an indivisible collective good from which they will benefit. Such individuals will only respond positively to involvement in collective action if there is a 'selective incentive' available to induce them to do so. Following from this argument, Oberschall claims that 'In order to explain inside opposition mobilization in high risk situations, one needs only to assume that individual rewards and selective incentives motivate the leaders and activists of conflict groups and that, given the same objective circumstances, some members of a collectivity will respond to these incentives in addition to being driven by the prospects of obtaining the collective good itself' (Oberschall 1973: 116). The author departs somewhat from Olsen's individualistic line of reasoning to acknowledge that the social network or pre-existing associations of an aggrieved group facilitates 'bloc recruitment' into a



movement (p.125). However, this acknowledgement does not bring into question Olson's assertion that collective action is out of the question solely on the promise to the individual of a collective good. To explain increasing collective action, Oberschall points to the role played by material and human resources. Relying on another of Olson's tenets, he suggests that 'resourceful actors' such as leaders, often external to the aggrieved group, are necessary to spark the movement into action. They offer selective incentives such as social rewards or sanctions to potential recruits (p. 117). (Moreover, leaders are motivated to lead by the promise of rewards such as prestige p.116.)

The emphasis given by Oberschall to the economic calculation of resources needed to make social movements work reached its zenith in the work of McCarthy and Zald. Like Oberschall, the authors identify the importance of material resources and 'entrepreneurial' leadership from outside of the aggrieved group (McCarthy and Zald 1973). As well, in their view, mobilisation is affected by the support or antagonism of outside groups and the rewards and costs of activity (McCarthy and Zald 1977). In this scheme, group solidarity is not forwarded as an important variable and the significance of grievance is discarded as lacking explanatory power because grievance is ubiquitous; what is crucial in explaining mobilisation is the 'flow of resources toward or away from specific social movements (McCarthy and Zald, 1977: 1216). Thus societal support or constraint of social movements is crucial to the process of mobilisation. The task of a social movement organisation is to turn social movement 'adherents' --those who believe in the goals of the movement-- into constituents of the SMO who will provide resources for its actions. Constituents are of two types: *conscience* or *beneficiary*; the former are supporters of the SMO who do not stand to gain directly from the actions of

the organisation, while the latter directly benefit from the collective good provided by the SMO.

Case studies have supported the assertions made by McCarthy and Zald. For example, in their study of the farm workers movement Jenkins and Perrow (1979) showed the critical importance to mobilisation of a leadership cadre from outside of the farm worker community and of external sponsorship. They concluded that 'rather than focusing on fluctuations in discontent to account for the emergence of insurgency, it seems fruitful to assume that grievances are relatively constant and pervasive....For many of the movements of the 1960's it was the interjection of resources from outside, not sharp increases in discontent that led to insurgent efforts' (Jenkins and Perrow, 1979: 353). While this study pointed out specific organisations such as unions as instrumental in channelling resources to a politically marginalised group, the overall thesis of McCarthy and Zald is that organisation of social movements in the present era (from the 1960's onwards) is the result of affluence. The authors maintain that disenfranchised groups become politically active when discretionary income and time supplied by conscience constituents is transferred to insurgent SMOs.

There has been a considerable amount of criticism directed at the 'economism' of RMT; however, many of its substantive claims have survived and are in contemporary usage. Objections to RMT have been made on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Among the former, Fireman and Gamson (1979) criticise Olson's rational choice model as it has been adopted by social movement theorists. While they uphold the RMT position of attributing a rational motive and practice to social movements, they question the utilitarian model for its claim that individual choice

determines the trajectory of collective action. Instead, they argue that group-interest rather than self-interest is involved in personal commitment to mobilisation. Two variables are involved in group-interest: the first is solidarity, a sense of shared fate and a desire to protect a common identity is reinforced by social connections to friends, relatives, participation in organisations, lifestyle and so on; the second variable is 'principle,' for example, the valuation of a collective good may be attached to a group entitlement. In this situation, collective justice becomes the motivation for action. These variables translate into loyalty and responsibility respectively and when a sense of urgency premised on necessity or opportunity is perceived to exist the chance of collective involvement occurring is increased.

The importance of the social context to the process of mobilisation is a theme to be found in many accounts of activism. These accounts offset the economic individualism inherent in the work of RMT theorists, as well as the thesis of 'professionalisation.' In these accounts the movement itself rather than the professional organiser becomes the key actor. Buechler (1993) points out that the resource-poor women's movement has traditionally been unable to supply selective incentives and yet has been able to achieve a high recruitment and commitment to its SMOs. He points out the critical role played by *social movement communities*, loosely organised informal networks of women, that, combined with formal SMOs, have been critical in the success of the women's movement. Likewise, Staggenborg (1998) identifies these same communities as crucial in maintaining the women's movement through the high and low points of the protest cycle. Doug McAdam (1988) terms these loose networks 'micromobilisation contexts' for political action. They serve as the collective settings in

which people, enjoying solidary incentives, jointly create interpretations of current and anticipated events out of which the rudiments of action are formed. McAdam (1982) and Morris (1993) argue that, in contrast to the views of McCarthy and Zald, professional organisers or 'movement entrepreneurs' were not responsible for initiating the civil rights movement in the USA. Rather, micromobilisation contexts in the form of indigenous organisations in the South including the church, student associations and local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) were responsible for building an infrastructure capable of mounting protest activities. All of these accounts challenge the notion of individual calculus posited by the early RM theorists and suggest that their view of social movement is limited by its insistence on a narrow range of explanation for mobilisation.

The Political Process model is a variant of the RMT model that addresses this problem by bringing ideology, grievances and political power back into the picture of mobilisation. Doug McAdam is the clearest exponent of this perspective, though others, notably Charles Tilly and William Gamson, belong to the same school of thought.

McAdam states the two principles of the political process model:

First, in contrast to the various classical formulations, a social movement is held to be above all else to be a political rather than a psychological phenomenon. That is, the factors shaping institutionalised political processes are argued to be of equal analytical utility in accounting for social insurgency. Second, a movement represents a continuous process from generation to decline, rather than a discrete series of developmental stages. (McAdam, 1982: 36)

The RMT model posed a challenge to pluralist explanations of politics in the United States by aligning itself with the 'elite theory' model. Elite theory challenges the pluralist conception that the political system consists of competing multiple centres of

power, none of which are sovereign and which, over time, balance each other's influence on the direction of political governance. Instead, elite theory maintains that there is a disparity of influence between the political elite and those excluded from power. RMT and Political Process theorists agree with this central precept in elite theory, 'social movements are seen, in both perspectives, as rational attempts by excluded groups to mobilize sufficient political leverage to advance collective interests through noninstitutionalized means' (McAdam 1982: 37). Where they disagree is on the question of agency.

Whereas RM theorists in their work represent excluded groups as essentially powerless without the help or advocacy of members of an elite, proponents of the political process model incorporate Marxist concepts of political agency. These include the potential for the oppressed to self-organise and the subjective transformation of consciousness from a state of powerlessness to the realisation of collective power (McAdam, 1982: 37-38) and the effect of historically determined structural changes on collective action (Tilly, 1978: 50). Political process attempts to show that those normally excluded from political power by those who have power nevertheless possess the possibility of demanding and taking power through their own efforts. The goal of the Political Process model is to examine the conditions which aid or impede these efforts.

Axiomatic to this approach is the difference between what Gamson calls members and challengers. He writes,

The central difference among political actors is captured by the idea of being inside or outside the polity. Those who are inside are

members whose interest is vested -that is, recognized as valid by other members. Those who are outside are challengers. They lack the basic prerogative of members- routine access to decisions that effect them. They may lack this because it is denied them in spite of their best efforts or because their best efforts are clumsy and ineffectual (Gamson, 1975: 140-145).

Gamson studied fifty-three challenging groups in the United States between 1800 and 1945. He concluded that for these groups success depended upon the entry of group spokespeople into the polity and whether they achieved advantages for the challenging group's members. He found that acceptance and acquisition were related, 80 percent of the accepted groups obtained advantages for their members while 21 percent of the non-accepted groups achieved advantages. The key importance of this study was not only its examination of tactics used by challenging groups (single-issue, bureaucratic groups willing to use violent tactics were more successful in gaining entry), but that actions and outcomes of any mobilisation are the result of intense interaction between members and challengers. Tilly (1978) refined this argument further by combining what he called a 'purposive' model of mobilisation which addressed group interests, organisation and resources with a 'causal' model of opportunities (named 'political opportunity structures' by later theorists) and threats posed to contending groups seeking admission to, or leverage within, the polity. In another important work, Tilly argues that changing opportunities and internal organisation will influence the 'repertoires of collective action' chosen by challenging groups (Tilly 1979). This model linking causal and goal directed factors, set in both long and short-run historical conditions, attempts to express the dynamism of social movements as propounded by the political process model.

Although the political process model compensates for the sparse and somewhat cynical economistic views of RM theorists such as McCarthy and Zald, the two approaches share a great deal in common. Specifically, they share a commitment to explain the rational basis for mobilisation, the *how* of social movement participation and organisation. There is agreement on the notion of polity and non-polity membership. However, where the two diverge is on the question of how non-polity members, short of resources and faced with resistance from polity members, are able to organise. RMT suggests that such groups cannot on their own obtain the wherewithal to act politically and so must rely on help from professional organisers and outside resources. Political process theorists dispute this claim by stating that internal organisation is sufficient to permit mobilisation. This difference is not substantial and since, as Pichardo (1988) argues, both approaches take into account the role played by polity members in the development of social movements, they therefore share common ground. Resolution to the dilemma can be arrived at by empirically investigating the motivation of elite groups in supporting non-polity members and by seeking to discover whether certain kinds of challenging groups receive more elite support than others.

The difference between RM theory and Political Process theory can be characterised as a family disagreement. What has posed more of a challenge to RMT is what has come to be known as New Social Movement (NSM) theory. NSM theory did not come into being as a response to RMT. If anything, NSM theory's appearance was consistent with the view that classical Marxism cannot account for social movements that do not have an explicit program of proletarian emancipation. Although there are differences within the field of NSM research, a postulate that binds the different

approaches is the historical distinctiveness of movements that emerged or re-emerged from the New Left of the 1960's. In contrast to RMT, NSM theorists explain the appearance of social movements in terms of new grievances which have arisen from social and structural changes in Western industrialised societies (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988: 7). Whereas resource mobilisation theorists dismiss the significance of grievance, new social movement theorists put historically generated grievance front and centre in their perspective. The environmental, peace gay/lesbian liberation and women's liberation movements are described by NSM theorists as expressing grievances different from the traditional worker's movement which preceded them in terms of political project, agency, constituency and organised action.

I will cover each of these elements in turn.

#### *New Social Movements, New Targets and New Directions.*

Unlike the worker's movement NSMs do not seek to challenge, reform or replace the capitalist class as the main antagonist in a battle over economic position or rights --although they are often opposed to many of the traditional values of capitalist society. A number of writers describe NSMs as situated in opposition to the substance or effects of cultural and structural forms such as white supremacy (civil rights movement) patriarchy (women's movement), heterosexism (gay/lesbian rights), militarism (peace movement) and anthropocentrism (ecology movement) (Boggs 1986). Giddens (1990) explains NSMs as forms of 'radical engagement' with the 'multidimensionality' of late modernity. He situates the labour movement (an old social movement) in opposition to globalising capital, free speech and democracy movements



in opposition to the modern state's arena of surveillance operations, the peace movement in the field of action delineated by industrialised warfare and the ecological movement as against the 'created environment.' He does not appear to situate the women's movement in any sphere of engagement --a grave omission.

Most NSM theorists would agree with Giddens that NSMs are evidence of the multidimensionality of 'modernity,' although such theorists apply this insight to an understanding of dynamics active within social systems whether capitalist, 'post-industrial' (Touraine) or 'complex' (Melluci). Most theorists situate the appearance of NSMs in the context of changes in post-war Western/industrialised society. There is consensus among these writers that the 'proliferation of antagonisms' out of which they have arisen indicate an ongoing 'democratic revolution' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). According to these observers, NSMs are evidence that the classical socialist project collapsing all anti-systemic opposition into one fundamental antagonism has been replaced by resistance to institutionalised forms of power on a number of fronts. Consistent with this view, NSM theorists construe agency as multiple, socially constructed, contingent and situated in formations opposed to various aspects of contemporary society.

*New Social Movements, New Agents of Transformation.*

How *new new* social movements are is debatable. For example, the civil rights and women's movements have histories preceding the 1960's (Scott 1990). Furthermore, the distinction is not clear because, as Tucker (1991) argues, there are examples of 'old movements' such as syndicalism which demonstrate concern for issues

thought to be the normative domain of NSMs -- identity and communicative action. Nevertheless, unlike many of the older movements, most contemporary movements reject the unique transformative role ascribed to the proletariat by Marx. This rejection is consistent with Marcuse's notion that the working class as agent of change has succumbed to the totalitarianism of consumerist society and the technological *a priori* of late capitalism (Marcuse 1964).

Consistent with de-emphasising the centrality of a specifically anti-capitalist project, NSMs, unlike Marxist-inspired movements, do not identify the proletariat as the primary agent of social transformation. Instead, NSMs consist of a plurality of groups and interests acting as autonomous agents in opposition to the institutions and structures of contemporary industrial or post-industrial society.

In his critique of 'post-industrial' society Alain Touraine (1977; 1981) retains the Marxian idea of social classes as fundamentally conflicting parties but rejects the notion of class as a structural entity. In his view, class is synonymous with identity and action, and not the outcome of a single logic of domination. Touraine maintains that classes are groups that recognise that they have common interests and out of these interests build a consciousness of themselves as a class. Social movements, then, *are* classes involved in an action system which defines social relations between different groups. According to Touraine society is self-produced by 'the changing and unstable results of relations between actors who through their social conflicts and via their cultural orientations change society' (Touraine 1981 p.30). Social movements are part of the very fabric of society and can be defined as 'the organised collective behaviour of a class actor struggling against his class adversary for the control of historicity in a

concrete community (Touraine, 1981, p. 77). By historicity Touraine refers to a society's historical environment, the social and cultural field of transformation in which it is embedded.

In contrast to Marxist claims that social change is determined by the struggle for realising objective class interests within the mode of production, Touraine's model highlights the struggle for cultural appropriation between contending class forces. He writes that this is particularly the case, in 'post-industrial society' where the system of 'historical action' is shaped by the contours of knowledge-based production (Touraine 1977). Thus, the repertoires of NSMs are different from their predecessors in that their action tends to be reflexive and symbolic rather than institutional, social rather than political. However, in two respects Touraine holds to the Marxist model in that he acknowledges the influence on collective action of the mode of production's historical stage of development and in that he characterises social movements as being in a *central conflict* with the ruling class (Touraine 1992). His point of departure from Marxism is that this conflict is not necessarily over control of the means of production.

Alberto Melluci endorses the sociocultural orientation of NSMs but questions what he sees as the traditional conception of agency attached to NSMs. His account is perhaps the furthest from Marxist interpretations of class agency that can be found. He decries the idea that social movements are in any way unified actors, 'social movements, should not be viewed as *personages*, living characters acting on the stage of history, but as socially constructed collective realities' (Melluci, 1995: 110). Melluci goes to great lengths to explain that collective action does not come about as the result of a structural precondition and that it should be regarded as 'a fact to be explained rather than as

evidence' (Melluci, 1995:111). It is not a unitary action but rather a negotiated process of constructing a 'collective identity.' He describes NSMs in contemporary society as arising not from structurally situated positions but from 'submerged networks' or aggregates of social groupings with unstable memberships (Melluci, 1989: 73).

Activists become collectively visible in mobilisations limited to a 'specific time and place' with 'no program and no future' and '...unlike their predecessors, contemporary actors are not guided by universal plan of history; rather, they resemble nomads who dwell within the present' (Melluci, 1989: 55).

While Melluci highlights the fluidity of social movement, he certainly draws connections between contemporary forms of mobilisation and what he calls 'complex society.' Interestingly, he does not define exactly what he means by this term, instead claiming that attempts to describe current societal conditions have reached an impasse. However, he provides *clues* to what he means by the term: 'complex societies are networks of high-density information' and as such produce a primary contradiction. On the one hand complex societies must facilitate, through training and education, the capacity for autonomy and reflexivity because without such facilitation individuals and groups could not process and exchange high-density information. On the other hand the 'pronounced differentiation' of complex societies requires that greater integration and control is required (Melluci, 1989: 45). Some groups such as women and youth, Melluci hypothesises, are more susceptible to the paradox of perceiving the potential for greater self-reflexiveness on the one hand and on the other, experiencing regulative mechanisms of control in the areas of relationships, forms of communication and biological needs.

The result is that in contemporary Western society where material needs have essentially been met and 'the individual potential for action becomes itself the object of action' (Melluci 1989: 46) 'individualisation' becomes a key component of contemporary social movements. As Melluci puts it, 'freedom *from* needs is replaced by freedom *of* needs...the right to equality, under whose banner all modern revolutions have been fought...is replaced by the right to difference' (pp.177-178). Thus, in contradistinction to the traditionally profiled unitary collective social movement, contemporary movements are characterised by individuals whose participation in constructing a collective identity is preceded by a calculation that joining the movement will meet their personal needs.

The question of agency, according to Melluci and Touraine cannot be premised on a central conflict tied to a general theory or historical philosophy. While Touraine retains the notion of a central conflict, albeit one that is not teleological, Melluci dispenses with such an idea. Instead, he emphasises the particularity of protest and the precariousness of the various forms that protest takes. Both writers represent the arrival of NSMs as a response to features of contemporary society, particularly to the technocratic and regulatory intrusiveness of modern social systems. By doing so, they decenter social class, keyed to the process of material production, as the driving force of radical transformation. In so doing, these writers and others postulate the connection of new movements to a new constituency.

*New Social Movements, New Constituency: The New Middle Class.*

NSMs come into being in response to, or as a result of, opportunities provided by structural or institutional changes apparent in modern or post-modern society. Consequently, they represent a constituency different to that of the traditional worker's movement. Those most affected by these changes tend to be members of the 'new middle class' as well as groups marginalised by the economic and social changes of late capitalism.

As we have seen, Melluci and Touraine situate the appearance of NSMs in the context of contemporary society. Their arguments, and particularly the argument of Touraine, are consistent with the work of Habermas. His thesis on the effects of rationalisation in modern society positions NSMs in a defensive posture to the encroachment of state and economic 'steering mechanisms.' These system mechanisms invade the sociocultural 'lifeworld' of normative generation and social integration. The new social movements are, according to Habermas, positioned 'along the seams between system and lifeworld' (Habermas 1987: 397). While this account, along with those of Melluci and Touraine, studiously avoid reducing social movement to capitalist social relations, other scholarship brings class back into the picture. Theories of 'post-Fordism' and 'disorganised capitalism' bring a critique of capitalism to the foreground in explaining the appearance of NSMs.

'Fordism' refers to an 'accumulation strategy' (R. Jessop, 1983) or the means by which capital is accumulated. Such a strategy is determined by the historical development of capital within existing class relations and requires that a 'hegemonic

project' of norms, habits and regulatory mechanisms be established to stabilise the relationship between the contending classes. The Fordist project became consolidated in the 1930's as a ruling class strategy to deal with the world-wide economic depression. Its main features were as follows: '....tayloristic mass production; mass consumption; the submission of labour to capital; social disintegration and individualisation; the vanishing of traditional worker's cultures and the emergence of the Keynesian welfare state.' (Hirsch 1988: 47). Hirsch describes NSMs as a reaction to the evolution of Fordism in the post-war era. Their decentralised organisation, social heterogeneity, anti-bureaucratic and anti-state stands are presented as new forms of struggle to the modern capitalist 'societalisation' consisting of commodification, corporatist regulation, social control and social fragmentation. However, these anti-hegemonic struggles are different from previous ones: 'compared with former phases of capitalist development, we are witnessing a decisive --and I believe irreversible-- break between economic class determination, political action and social conflict' (Hirsch: 49). Hirsch attributes this break in large part to corporatism, the emergence of new issues such as ecological destruction, and to the dissolution of working class culture and organisation. His article speculates whether in the post-Fordist era, characterised by neo-liberalism and the decline of the Keynesian state, NSMs will continue to be counter-hegemonic, or whether they may be co-opted into a new 'historical bloc' with capital.

Various writers have theorised that the denouement of the working class has left the way open for the 'new middle class' (Offe 1985) or 'service class' (Lash and Urry 1987) to become a political force and that NSMs are the result of that force. Urry's complicated analysis of social class includes the causal power of class, its self-

organisation and the place where class organises (Urry 1995). He describes the 'service class' as a group which in the 'organised' phase of capitalism (cf. Fordism) came into being as an occupational group --professional public service employees-- located between capital and labour. Its influence as a 'third force' grew out of the antagonistic relationship between capital and labour; as a class it developed autonomy by exerting influence over inclusion/exclusion to labour markets, credentialism, organisation of the state and so on. Lash and Urry see NSMs as an expression of the influence exerted by members of this class who in disproportionate numbers fill the ranks of the various movements.<sup>7</sup> Offe likewise, views the 'new middle class' as well as decommodified groups (students, homemakers, the unemployed) as being those most affected by the deepening of bureaucratic capitalism and those most likely to be concerned with issues related to personal autonomy and identity.

The problems with both of these accounts is that the authors do not show the exact relationship between membership in the new middle/service class and the emergence of NSMs. They do not demonstrate how structural changes, eg. organised capitalism to unorganised capitalism, affect the interests of this class such that, as a class-for-itself, its members see social movement organisation as a remedy to the problems that they face brought about by change. Eder (1985,1995) tries to make these connections by constructing NSMs as a 'cultural opportunity structure' for middle class people. Following Urry, he argues that the new middle class historically constituted itself through the social opportunities offered by its professional occupational advantages. However, because of its nebulous position sandwiched between labour and capital, it was left with a residual concern about its identity. In addition 'the middle



classes live with a traditional notion of the good life, with consensual social relations playing a prominent role. Thus we complement the idea of a specific opportunity structure with the idea of a 'cultural opportunity structure' (Eder 1995: 38). Eder sutures together these several key elements, identity, the good life, and consensual communication as values which find political expression in NSMs. By doing so he bridges the conceptual gap between describing the middle-class as a class 'in-itself' and the means by which it pursues its goals as a 'class-for-itself.' The problem with this argument is that Eder appears to invest the middle class as the unitary subject of historically specific action, a 'personage' as Melucci would say. As Pakulski (1995) points out, the evidence is that NSMs typically do not operate with the consistency and purpose that this personified role suggests. Thus attempts to bring class back into the picture as an explanation of social movements remains problematic.

#### *New Social Movement Action and Organisation.*

While the question of constituency remains ambiguous in the writing of NSM theorists, a clearer consensus emerges in their writing on the nature of contemporary movement organisation and action. In short, they characterise NSM's as preoccupied with objectives of extending democracy and adopting symbolic and expressive tactics over instrumental means of political action. The tactics of NSMs are often unconventional, 'They prefer small-scale, decentralised organisations, are anti-hierarchical, and favour direct democracy' (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988: 7). This statement contrasts NSMs to the traditional worker's movement organisation characterised as hierarchical, centralised and bureaucratic. It sums up a common

finding in social movement research. Magnusson (1996), for example, states that, 'democracy is a movement within the movements, where it finds expression in self-education, affinity network, information exchanges, co-operatives, institutions for public service and self-help and so on.' In order to understand the link between democracy and the various ways that it is expressed, I will begin with an examination of the underlying social and historical aspects of the democratic impulse which informs NSMs.

As we have seen, writers such as Touraine and Melluci emphasise the social and cultural aspects of social movements, particularly with regard to their promotion of individuality and subjectivity. According to Touraine these values override the traditional political commitment of becoming a 'subordinate in a logic of order.' He states:

The new social movements seem as pacific and as interested in consciousness-raising as the others were violent and interested in the control of power. In brief, the old social movements were associated with the idea of revolution, the new ones are associated with the idea of democracy. Consequently, the idea of democracy can no longer be defined by institutional rules. One cannot consider democratic a regime that is not interested in the rights of the personal subject, which we again call, as in the eighteenth century, the rights of man. However, these are no longer seen as the rights -always linked to duties- of citizens, but as the rights of the individual over against encroaching political power. (Touraine, 1992: 143)

Consistent with this observation is the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) who claim that NSMs are evidence of the dissolution of socialist essentialism. Furthermore, the appearance of NSMs represents the latest stage in the evolution of the 'democratic revolution' set in motion by the revolution of 1789, '.....the break with the *ancien regime*, symbolised by the declaration of the Rights of Man, would provide the

discursive conditions which made it possible to propose the different forms of inequality as illegitimate and anti-natural, and thus make them equivalent as forms of oppression.' By creating a 'chain of equivalence' between various forms of inequality, the democratic revolution, 'spread ..equality and liberty into increasingly wider domains and therefore acted as a fermenting agent upon the different struggles against subordination' ( Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:155).

According to the authors, *subordination* is a relation where 'an agent is subjected to the decision of another, and *oppression* is where relations of subordination have been transformed into 'sites of antagonism.' Oppression, then, occurs when a fixed relation of subordination, constituted discursively, is transformed by a *democratic* discourse which sets in motion a resistance to domination of one agent by another. A necessary but not sufficient condition for struggle occurs when a collective subject is negated, for example by the denial of rights or when, particularly in the case of the struggles of women and of people of colour, subjects are kept in subordination by a set of discourses but are, 'interpellated as equal by other discourses' (Laclau 1988). The claim of equality which follows the subject's discovery of discourses challenging to the subordinating discourse is the starting point for the subject's liberation from oppression.

However, the existence of a democratic discourse does not by itself promote liberation. Like many of the NSM theorists covered so far, the authors state that changing structural and cultural conditions activate the effect of such discourses. The 'proliferation of antagonisms' represented by NSMs are brought into being by the hegemonic formation of post-war capitalism whose Fordist 'historical bloc' oversees the extension of capitalist social relations to a range of social activities previously excluded

from market penetration. This commodification of social life occurs along with two other features of Fordism, the pervasiveness of bureaucratic state intervention and uniformity produced by the mass culture of the media. Groups are affected differently by these changes. For example, the interventionist state constrains women in some ways, while providing opportunity for autonomy in other ways. The state provides a site of antagonism whereby struggle involves action aimed at extending or foreclosing regulatory intervention. Such action is aimed at establishing the rights of women against the limits of patriarchal ascription.

Laclau and Mouffe's model of social construction and celebration of a 'radical pluralism' is a critique of the failure of Marxism to address the proliferation of antagonisms released by the bourgeois revolution as it displaced the hierarchic ordering of feudal society. This failure arises from the inability of Marxism to build an adequate counter-hegemony based on the concept of a foundational social division between two classes and the privileging of one of those classes in ending this antagonism (Laclau 1988, also contests Touraine's attempt to reintroduce class antagonism for these same reasons).

While Laclau and Mouffe theorise NSMs as expressions of resistance to subordination and as agitators for the extension of democracy, other writers of the 'post-Marxist' school explore the organisational dimensions of the democratic revolution in contemporary conditions. These studies explore the relationship between the form of action taken by NSMs and the political space in which it takes place. According to Melluci, 'the visible action of contemporary movements depends upon their production of new cultural codes within submerged networks' (Melluci, 1989: 73). In other words,

visible protest and its outcome is only part of the story of social movements. The social construction of meaning takes place outside of the visible arena of action and is of great significance in generating visible actions which in a post-industrial society require a high degree of symbolic content. This insight expresses succinctly the 'culturalist' position of NSMT.

The origins, contents and targets of the 'new cultural codes' highlighted by Melluci have been the subjects of enquiry by a number of writers. If, as Laclau (1988) claims, 'democracy is our most subversive idea because it interrupts all existing discourses and practices of subordination' (p.96), and that NSMs extend the democratic revolution, we might expect, as Magnusson suggests, that their actions would reflect this imperative. Democratic practice was incorporated into the cultural practices of NSMs from two key sources, the new left of the 1960's and the women's movement which itself evolved from the new left. Wini Breines (1982) identifies 'pre-figurative politics' as a central feature in the history of the new left,

the term *prefigurative politics* is used to designate an essentially anti-organisational politics characteristic of the movement, as well as parts of the new left leadership, and may be recognised in counter-institutions, demonstrations and the attempt to embody personal and anti-hierarchical values in politics... The crux of prefigurative politics imposed substantial tasks, the central one being to create and sustain within the live practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that "prefigured" and embodied the desired society. (p.6)

Integral to the practice of prefigurative politics is the idea of community.

Breines indicates the importance to new left activists of bringing private and public spheres together by emphasising personal rather than instrumental relationships (See

also Flacks 1995). In essence, this model of organising was an attempt to build a democratic counter-institution to the hierarchical structure of mainstream politics.

However, as many women activists attest, the egalitarian communities created by the social movement organisations of the era did not include the equal participation of women. In a historical validation of Laclau and Mouffe's theory of equivalencies, many women activists who observed the contradiction between the new left's discourse of equality and the sexism practised by male activists, were instrumental in forming the women's liberation movement (Evans 1979, Breines 1982: 38). A first step in articulating the antagonism of sexual inequality took the form of 'consciousness-raising' by women in caucus and later in groups specifically established to explore women's oppression. Out of consciousness-raising came the analysis that the 'personal is political.' This phrase was the distillation of a discourse that prompted women to resist male oppression. It allowed women to examine the range of male domination in everyday life --combining experience in public and private spheres into an overall theory of subordination (MacKinnon 1989). Noel Sturgeon (1995) summarises the elements of feminist theorising that have had an impact on NSMs:

...self-reflexivity regarding the construction of social identities, the centrality of the body as a location for political discourse, the emphasis on changing personal relations as a method for revising social relations, the expansion of the political arena into previously private areas, the critique of immediatist (and masculinist) theories of revolution and the preference for transformational models of social change, and the supposed expressiveness rather than instrumentality of new movements. (Sturgeon, 1995: 45).

While evidence of this theoretical foundation can be found in the practice of most contemporary movements, it was most completely adopted in the affinity groups

which formed the cellular structure of 'direct action' organisations (largely concentrated in the peace and environmental movements). Its prefigurative focus emphasised non-violence, consensus decision-making, anti-hierarchical structure and the creation of space for different political identities within SMOs. These internal organisational principles were co-extensive with the choice of tactics used by movements in their acts of confrontation with, or resistance to, authority. Such tactics involve symbolic challenges to the 'dominant codes' (Melluci, 1989: 60) and are aimed at exposing the inherently undemocratic decision-making practices of rulers in the form of institutional procedures, policies and law-making. As Melluci states, 'collective mobilisation forces power into the open and exposes the interests behind the apparent neutrality of its rationality.' (Melluci, 1994:185).

The act of forcing power into the open raises the question of where NSMs make a stand; in other words, where, in relation to political and social structure, do they transform themselves from the submerged to the visible? The familiar refrain from many NSM theorists is that they do not operate in the same space as state-oriented political parties or interest groups, that is to say, they tend to be 'extra-institutional' in their actions. Boggs (1986) claims that they emerge primarily outside of the 'bourgeois public sphere,' that they are rooted in civil society and that they can therefore be regarded as 'social or even pre-political' (Boggs, 1986: 47). Touraine likewise, positions NSMs in civil society (defined as 'the social space of production of social life by work and the creation of cultural values,' Touraine, 1992: 135) claiming that through their direct action they maintain the autonomy of civil society (1992: 142). By contrast, Melucci (1994) downplays the state/civil society split by arguing that in 'complex

society' the state has been replaced by a two-tier system of transnational relationships above and a system of decision-making 'partial governments' and representational organisations below. Moreover, the private interests which define civil society have lost all sense of permanence. In this situation democracy, rather than being a matter of competition for government resources, as in the traditional model, 'requires conditions for enhancing the recognition and autonomy of individual and collective signifying processes in everyday life' (Melluci, 1994: 188). Social movement organisations strive to provide these conditions in 'public spaces' that simultaneously represent the interests of an actor and promote a 'democracy of everyday life' by 'identifying with the general interests of the community' (p.189).

While new social movement theorists describe the organisation and action of the groups that they study somewhat differently, there is enough of a conceptual convergence among them that some generalisations are possible. The following typology brings together many of the themes elaborated in the preceding analysis: NSMs are different from the traditional worker's movement in as much as they mobilise to address supra-class issues such as ecology and gender. Furthermore, they operate politically on the understanding that there are a multiplicity of social divisions, rather than one fundamental fault-line of class. Political action is itself redefined by contemporary movements to include a broad rather than narrow reading of what constitutes politics. This includes action, often symbolic, which operates outside of the 'normal' channels of institutional interaction and is embedded in an organisational milieu of collective identity building. The construction of identity is no less political an act than the more visible forms of action taken by new social movement organisations



since its prefigurative content is based on providing a model of non-hierarchically structured community which preserves space for personal and individual development. Most NSM theorists attribute the different positioning, organisation and action of contemporary movements to changes in the mode of capital accumulation common to Western industrialised societies in the post-war era.

### **Comparing Resource Mobilisation Theory, Political Process and New Social Movement Theory.**

Resource mobilisation theory and new social movement theory dominate current sociological thought on social movements. In this section I will examine the points at which these theories are compatible and the points at which they are not. I will then apply the result of this exercise to examine the small literature on the study of coalitions. Since the RMT and Political Process models are closely related, I will refer to them together under the rubric of RMT drawing attention to variation represented by Political Process when called for.

RMT and NSM theory are different because theoretically they are pitched at different levels of analysis. The following analysis utilises models of sociological theorising set out by J. Turner (1986). RMT is a classic middle-range theory in that it is a propositional scheme which explores theory and empirical research within the 'middle-range' between concrete empirical or causal models and meta-theoretical levels of abstraction. In other words, middle-range theory explores the relationship among generic variables such as mobilisation, organisation and resources, showing how one affects another in a given set of circumstances. These concepts can be confidently

attached to a limited set of substantive phenomena (e.g. specific organisations or campaigns) that are amenable to empirical processes of observation and measurement.

By contrast, most NSM theory is an 'analytical scheme' which includes elements of meta-theory. An analytical scheme consists of a typology which attempts to explain empirical phenomena by fitting them into a classificatory framework. Most NSM theory consists of what Turner calls a descriptive or sensitising scheme of 'loosely assembled congeries of concepts intended only to sensitise and orient researchers to certain critical processes (Turner, 1986: 11). Examples might be conceptual congeries such as 'complex society,' or 'Fordism.' A general analytic framework containing such terms is highly abstract and is able to encompass a broader range of variables than those captured by a middle range theory. However, except where formal propositions can be established, for example, based on Marxist concepts of capitalist 'laws of motion,' the loose structure of the analytic scheme does not easily allow for empirical validation or refutation.

Much NSM theory remains macro-theoretical in orientation. Typically, phenomenon such as cultural and normative developments in social movement practice are connected thematically to larger historical and structural processes. Testing the empirical validity of this association is virtually impossible given the generality of the concepts involved and the creative leap required to link discrete instances of cultural practice with overarching social structures. Perhaps, by definition, sensitising schemes should not be expected to serve as the basis for empirical investigation. However, therein lies their weakness --if the relationship of culture and structure can only be understood in terms of historical era or changing political formations, the world of

empirical regularity in which phenomena are embedded becomes excluded. Scott (1990) writes that at this level of analysis, the *aim* of social movements is expressed in one dimension only, namely that of 'the creation of alternative societies which challenge the status quo *in toto*.' According to Scott this 'reduces social movements to (1) their most fundamentalist expressions and (2) their cultural aspects' (Scott, 1990:150). As a result, any discussion of movement aims more limited than the complete overthrow of the ruling order, or alternatively, discussion of political action designed to be anything other than 'self-referential,' is foreclosed.

Unlike NSM theory, RMT has long been associated with the empirical study of substantive areas of collective behaviour and social movement organisation. In contrast to the macro-theoretical and culturalist bias of NSM theory, RMT's 'realist' bias (Scott: 133) is rooted in research confined to the organisational problems of achieving political effectiveness. As such it extends the methodology of the political science tradition to include populations treated as peripheral by political science itself ( 'Rebellion... is simply politics by other means' Gamson, 1975: 139). Focusing its analysis on a narrower range of variables readily linked to empirical patterns of political behaviour, RMT is capable of generating propositions based on 'operationalised concepts that are incorporated in statements of covariance for a limited range of phenomena' (Turner, 1986: 88). For example, in explaining the organisational dilemma faced by activists seeking new resources at a specific point in a movement's mobilisation, Doug McAdam writes 'as insurgents increasingly seek to cultivate ties to outside groups, their indigenous links are likely to grow weaker' (Mc Adam 1982: 52). RMT, particularly its Political Process variant, is full of statements such as this one.

In contrast to NSM theory, RMT is capable of examining and generating testable hypotheses on a range of issues. Its level of analysis makes it suited to examining the internal and external factors affecting social movement strategies as well as the costs and risks of such strategies. Unlike NSM theory whose concern with overarching sociological processes is somewhat reminiscent of the 'strain theories' challenged by RMT, RMT does not assume that social relations and collective interest are sufficient to explain insurgency. RMT states that collective action must be accounted for in terms of how movements produce themselves and in terms of political opportunity or available resources. However, in attempting to generate theoretical propositions linking these variables it does not move beyond a 'rational choice' model. RMT confines itself to a measurable but limited examination of means and ends and in so doing ignores the cultural context of values and the role of social context in promoting mobilisation. Its utilitarian focus on strategy, process and outcome prevents it from moving beyond the 'known' institutional realm of politics to arrive at generalisations that have the breadth or complexity of NSM theory.

The 'politics by other means' thesis of RMT precludes any conceptualisation of what is new about "new" social movements. Because NSM theory comes out of the European Marxist tradition, and with its adoption of the Gramscian model of hegemony, it can be argued to be a *revision* of that tradition (Epstein 1990). It redefines the notion of politics to include the specificity of cultural forms that indicate changes in the production and reproduction of advanced capitalism. And while Tilly and McAdam both claim Marxism to be influential in their work, it is a limited aspect of Marxism which focuses on the unequal distribution of resources between dominant and

subordinate interests in a system. The specificity of capitalism and the mechanisms that reproduce the system itself do not enter their analysis. The word 'capitalism' or the word 'class' are rarely, if ever, used in the American tradition, whereas they are consistently referred to in the European tradition. RM theorists seem unwilling to grasp these concepts or to encompass insurgency which does not conform to the institutionally circumscribed route to acceptance within the polity (Epstein 1990; Sturgeon 1995; Mayer 1995; Mayer and Roth 1995).

However, NSM theory can be accused of the opposite omission because it fails to include in its analysis the extent to which new social movements operate in the conventional political arena. Plotke (1990) argues that, in its rejection of orthodox Marxism, NSM theory has merely inverted the centrality of working class agency recasting contemporary movements as the collective agent of historical change. NSM theorists emphasise cultural and social objectives over material struggles and autonomy over engagement with the state. According to Plotke, this emphasis creates an equally unacceptable orthodoxy because NSMs include material and cultural aspects of struggle in their work. For example, the women's movement has pursued goals at the cultural level, deconstructing traditional conceptions of femininity but it has equally been involved in fighting for measures of legal equity and socioeconomic redistribution. The notion that NSMs are somehow waging a unique struggle beyond the realm of the political is untenable in Plotke's view. Issues of identity and autonomy cannot be pursued by ignoring relations between the bearers of a particular identity and the rest of society. Furthermore, without engaging in the process of alliance-building with other

groups/movements, the objectives of a given movement cannot be easily realised. Such engagement requires the development of political strategising.

While RMT has been criticised for its economism, unable to capture the 'deep' structures behind the appearance of contemporary social movements, NSM theory has been criticised for the opposite: failing to explicate the necessary conditions, material, organisational and strategic, for mobilisation. For example, in his critique of the structural preconditions of NSM emergence, Bagguley (1992) criticises 'new middle class' theorists for ignoring the resource mobilisation implications of new middle class involvement in social movements, 'NSMs are not the political forms of expression of the interests of the service class, nor the expression of frustration of middle class alienation' (p.39). Rather, he argues, the relationship between the new middle class and NSMs is contingent, not necessary. What is crucial about the involvement of this class is the 'social resources' that it brings to the movement - an 'expanded means of mental production,' (p.38) in the form of knowledge-based skills.

The critiques advanced by Bagguley and Plotke identify lacunae in NSM theory which can be compensated for, to some extent, by taking into consideration aspects of the RM thesis. However, some caution is also called for. For example, Plotke does not take into account that within any given movement there are different elements; some may pursue a novel approach, others may pursue a more traditional approach (see Freeman's account of the old and young branches of the women's movement, Freeman, 1979). As a result, he overlooks the importance of those parts of the movement which specifically reject conventional means of protest. Bagguley's argument raises more questions than it answers. If the interests of the 'new middle class' are not the

motivating factor explaining the predominance of this class in NSM's, and if the view (held by Eder) of the middle class as a class acting for itself is unacceptable, why would the middle class bring its expanded mental production to such movements? Despite these problems, the main thrust of Plotke's and Bagguley's arguments are germane - analysis of NSMs should not ignore the importance of resources or specifically instrumental/political action in any conceptualising of contemporary movements.

Despite the difficulties of combining the two models, trying to synthesise the *how* of RMT and *why* of NSM has proved irresistible to some theorists. For example, Klandermans and Tarrow (1988) argue that in terms of social movement emergence there is a 'gap left by both paradigms between the structural determinants of social movements and the psychological dynamics of individual participation in such movements' (p.9). They endeavour to explain how the process of mobilisation bridges the gap between structural transformation and new forms of action. NSM theory is solely concerned with 'mobilisation potential,' the structural factors predisposing groups to collective action, but ignores how this potential actually becomes action. RMT ignores mobilisation potential and concentrates on the resources, costs and benefits which show how action becomes a reality. The authors argue that the two approaches can meet in the concept of 'consensus mobilisation' which is the 'process by which a social movement tries to obtain support for its viewpoints' (Klandermans, 1984: 586). NSM explains potential for action, RMT demonstrates how potential can be transformed into consensus for mobilisation and from there to action.

Although RMT, like NSM, tends to ignore consensus mobilisation, its emphasis on mobilisation can illuminate this process showing how mobilisation potential can be

translated into consensus for action. In fact, after much criticism concerning RMT's lack of cultural explanations, Snow et al (1986) added the concept of *grievance interpretation* to offset the instrumental purposive-rationality of the paradigm. Borrowing the concept of 'framing' from Goffman, the authors show how interpretive resources, meanings, and other ideational elements are used by social movement organisations to garner support and to attack opponents. Through framing the movement's views, so that they resonate with an audience of potential recruits, a SMO can facilitate consensus mobilisation as a prelude to action mobilisation. While framing represents an advance, it does not move RMT beyond its concern with resources, political opportunity, inclusion or exclusion from political relevance, or strategic effectiveness (Meyer 1995). Framing becomes part of the organisational repertoire by which movements operate strategically to garner support, defeat opposition groups etc. It does not easily contribute to an understanding of why contemporary movements choose to engage in culturally self-referential or purely expressive action (Melluci 1985; Pizzorno 1985). Consequently, rather than creating a synthesis of RMT and NSM theories, a project examining the role played by framing (or any other RMT concept) in consensus mobilisation would pull the research firmly back into the middle range of RMT. Such research would effectively sideline the importance of macro-processes such as globalisation, capital accumulation and hegemony to the status of patterns in an interesting backdrop.

In sum, NSM and RMT make for an uneasy fit at best. However, where they can usefully come together is at the level of conceptual definition --by providing an answer to the question, what is a social movement? Mario Diani (1992) argues that efforts to



synthesise social movement perspectives have ignored the need to come up with a common definition of 'social movement.' He argues that while concepts are not the same as theories, they are the cornerstone of theorising. From a survey of NSM and RMT literature, much of which has been reviewed in this chapter, Diani extracts four features common to all social movements: a) networks of informal interaction; b) shared beliefs and solidarity; c) collective action on conflictual issues; d) action which displays largely outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of social life. From these elements he synthesises a definition of social movement:

'A social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity' (Diani 1992: 13).

Diani's synthesis will stand as the operationalised definition for this study; however, before I can apply it to the case of NTA a few points need to be clarified. The reader will notice that the above definition does not make 'social movement' synonymous with 'social movement organisation.' McCarthy and Zald (1977) define *social movements* as, 'a set of opinions or beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society' and *social movement organisations* as, 'complex or formal organisation which identifies its goals with the preferences of the social movement' (McCarthy and Zald: 1218). While this distinction stands, McCarthy and Zald's definition of social movement requires supplementation. The idea of *network* needs to be added to the concept of social movement. As we have seen in both the work of political process and NSM theorists, social movements are more than a 'set of opinions,' they are made up of

networks of actors or micromobilisation contexts. Without such networks, social movement organisation would be inconceivable. The looser definition of 'social movements' as networks distinguishes them from more rigidly structured phenomena such as parties or lobby groups.

A protest may or may not be a social movement. The likelihood of protest occurring depends on the degree of collective identity enjoyed by a social movement. Diani defines the optimal development of collective identity as being when 'the sense of belongingness exceeds the length of the public activities and campaigns' (Diani, 1993: 16). Collective identity is a key concept in the following study. Recent research shows that movements do not have a monolithic identity; issue and action framing disputes between different players in a movement demonstrate that a number of collective identities exist, and often compete, within a movement (Benford 1993).

A coalition is not a social movement. It is however, an alliance of social movement organisations. Diani maintains the standard argument that coalitions consist of an alliance of groups that come together to maximise the effect of their actions and resources. The interaction of organisations working together in coalition, he argues, is not conducive to building collective identity. While the findings of the present study contradict this assertion, the literature reviewed below on coalition building and maintenance reveals the substantial obstacles to collective identity.

### **Social theory and research: coalitions**

Research on social movement coalitions demonstrates the trademark of the theoretical approaches named above. Most research on coalitions has been conducted in

the United States and perhaps, not surprisingly, falls within the RMT tradition.

However, there are also social-theoretical approaches devoted to explicating the problems of coalition formation; there are explicitly cultural approaches and there are studies that originate in the Marxist or political economy tradition. I will deal with each of these in turn.

### *Social-Theoretical Approaches.*

Social-theoretical approaches to social transformation generally do not examine coalitions as such. Rather, they explore agency and how variables such as subjectivity, values and ideology influence the potential for cross-movement co-operation. Studies, which often take the form of commentaries, look at differences in value orientations among movements. For example, in their historical overview of the U.S. environmental movement, Gould, Weinberg and Schnaiberg (1993) argue that environmentalists will not be able to achieve "sustainable legitimacy" if they do not combine forces with social justice movements. This requires that they integrate their promotion of 'use value with notions of 'exchange value' propelling social justice movements. In attempting to find common ground between movements constructed around notions of 'value' (eg. socialist formations) and movements constructed around 'difference' (eg. ethnic pride groups) Jordan (1994) arrives at a definition of oppression which fits the program of both types: 'oppression exists when one collective benefits because another collective is simultaneously deprived.' Likewise, Fraser (1995) ponders the contradictions between a politics of identity and a material politics of structural transformation, arguing for the

inclusion of only those aspects of identity and recognition that can be included in a politics of social inequality.

The last two examples echo the theme of tension between traditional and 'new' social movements found in NSM theory. The politics of recognition based on the deconstruction of identity and difference has prompted much philosophical exploration of the nature of subjectivity and agency, particularly as these have posed problems for furthering the aims of movements based on ethnicity and gender. For example, early models of solidarity based on essentialist notions of 'sisterhood' have been criticised for not representing the diversity of the women's movement (Hooks 1984; Fraser and Nicholson, 1994). Various writers have suggested ways that diversity and co-operation can be accommodated in the women's movement. These range from postmodernist prescriptions which argue against unified agency, valuing the rifts among women and releasing the term women into a site of 'permanent openness and resignifiability' (Butler, 1995: 50), to the radical epistemology of building a culture of 'multiple subjects' where, through imagination, movement participants can 'reinvent themselves in the other' without presuming to speak in the voice of the other (Harding, 1992). The more pragmatic theorising of Caroline Andrew argues for reconfiguring ethnic and gender based pluralism as 'citizenship-based coalition politics' (Andrew, 1995).

There is a great deal of literature of the kind mentioned above. Exploring the tensions which arise as a result of trying to build effective agency (when the whole notion of agency is controversial) has been the preoccupation of theorists in the humanities and social sciences for some time. The postmodern challenge to traditional 'foundational' interpretations of progress has prompted much of this enquiry; however,

much has also come about as a result of concern for the dilemmas facing contemporary movements. Interestingly, very little substantive research has been conducted into the impact of postmodernism or identity politics on social movement cohesion. Research projects focusing on tensions arising from ideological difference and/or resource deployment are more commonplace.

### *RMT and Coalitions.*

True to the resource mobilisation tradition, coalitions are represented as social movement organisations which come into being in order to maximise the chances of political success for those participating in them. McCarthy and Zald (1977) note that SMO tactics are affected by the degree of inter-organisational competition or co-operation that they encounter in a given field of action. Coalitions are most likely to form when environmental conditions present either an opportunity for victory or a threat, particularly if a counter-movement becomes active (McCarthy and Zald 1980). McAdam (1982) notes that SMOs within the same social movement sector both compete and co-operate. He noted that the big four civil rights organisations alternately competed or co-operated in coalitions at different times depending on the conditions that they confronted in the Southern U.S.

In her study of the U.S. pro-choice movement, Staggenborg (1986) looked at the conditions that affect the formation and demise of coalitions. She concluded that coalitions are most likely to form when individual organisations lack resources to take advantage of opportunities or to fend off threats. Also an incentive for participation exists when coalition work allows member SMOs to conserve resources for tactics other

than those engaged in by the coalition. Disincentives for participation include conditions where individual member organisational needs and ideologies cause differences over tactics and competition for resources within the coalition. Lastly, she found that when the exceptional circumstances which brought the coalition into being subside, ideological and resource disputes (eg. resentment over members who don't pull their weight) are more likely to arise.

In their study of the peace movement, Hathway and Mayer (1993) examined two long-term coalitions focusing on exactly this period in a coalition's life cycle. They concluded that because of their proximity within a social movement sector, groups that co-operate are also more likely to compete for resources to secure their own organisational survival. A strategy of 'co-operative differentiation' can offset some of the difficulties that are more likely to occur in the 'maintenance' period identified by Staggenborg. This strategy entails responding differently to distinct audiences 'emphasising organisational differences to potential supporters while emphasising co-operation to government officials' (p179). Within the coalition, they discovered that co-operation was enhanced by having an established structure, celebrating past achievements, and taking measures to mitigate competition: allowing for the expression of different ideological positions, avoiding divisive decision-making and so on. They also discovered that the more consensual and loosely organised the organisation, the greater the chance of survival. By contrast, Staggenborg (1988) found that in the pro-choice movement, despite tensions between paid professionals and grassroots supporters, coalitions that became formalised ran better and maintained their existence longer than those that did not.

Staggenborg, Hathway and Mayer stay firmly within the Parameters of RMT by examining the political and organisational structures which influence the process of coalition formation and maintenance. Downey's 1986 ethnographic study of the Clamshell Alliance --an anti-nuclear power direct action coalition-- combines elements usually outside the purview of RMT --ideology and identity-- to show how the internal culture of an organisation can influence its use of resources and choice of tactics. Two components of the alliance's identity, radical egalitarianism and instrumental effectiveness became a central contradiction which limited the coalition's range of actions. Resources and strategies are themselves imbued with ideological significance because their use is held by participants to be consistent with the organisation's principles and identity. Disputes over the upholding of this consistency, or over the principles themselves can lead to fracture and immobilisation. Unlike the preceding studies, Downey demonstrates in this study that ideological disputes within coalitions are as likely during heightened periods of action as they are during periods of 'maintenance.'

In an attempt to include some of the insights of NSM into their synopsis of the American anti-nuclear 'Freeze' movement, Rochon and Meyer (1997) argue that RMT identifies political opportunities that give specific demands a wide popular appeal, and can thereby demonstrate how mobilisation occurs at a particular time. However, it neglects how the movement's goals are culturally defined at that time. NSM theory's cultural component shows how building a political and social identity, which resonates with public perceptions of a problem at a particular juncture, compensates for this failure. The authors claim that the coalitions of the Freeze movement operated

*politically* by coalescing a force to lobby the government and *pedagogically* to influence the cultural values of the public through its network of organisations.

Coalition research in the RMT tradition focuses on the strategic implications of coalition formation and the organisational factors, internal and external, that promote or impede the survival of coalitions over time. While there is some variation in the identification of these factors, the maximisation of resources offered by coalitions is a central theme in all of the studies. From this starting point variables that intervene to facilitate or detract from the process of maximisation are discussed, primary among them is the degree of co-operation or competition among coalition members. Unity in coalitions is always contingent.

#### *Culturally Focused Studies.*

In a recent article McAdam accused RMT of a 'strong rationalist and structural bias' (McAdam 1994). RMT proposes that at a macro-level, mobilisation is governed by political opportunity structure while at the micro level, the embeddedness of SMOs in associational networks makes recruits 'structurally available.' RMT takes little account of ideas, ideology and identity in the formation of activist communities or organisations. As a counterweight to RMT's bias, a number of studies focus on the cultural underpinnings of coalition organisation and action.

In a study of cross-cultural coalitions Chang and Diaz-Veizades (1996) examined Latino-Black and Korean-Black coalitions created to resolve inter-communal tensions in Los Angeles. Both coalitions foundered because they adopted a 'dialogue model' which ran into cultural and political obstacles to effective communication and



goal-setting among member groups. The authors concluded that individuals joined coalitions, not for individual incentives, but for 'collective pay-offs' that addressed group-based needs. However, they found that group-based history had an impact on the dynamics within the coalition. Differences in experiences of oppression and discrimination as well as different cultural norms and expectations resulted in different future-oriented goals. For example, the need of the Latino community to advance politically even at the expense of cross-cultural relations was problematic in the case of the Latino-Black coalition. The authors concluded that, 'the role of group-history on coalitions will be particularly germane when entering into coalitions with historically disenfranchised groups whose collective history of betrayal and oppression will influence perceptions of, and behaviour towards, other coalition partners' (Chang and Diaz-Veizades: 677).

The question of multi-cultural alliance was the subject of an ethnographic study developed by Paul Lichterman (1995). He examined the impediments to such an alliance between grassroots environmentalists (greens) and local 'anti-toxic' groups in the U.S. The former were largely made up of members from white middle class backgrounds, while the latter were made up mainly of African-American members from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. He based his research on the premise that 'routine practices of togetherness' are as important in understanding the organisation of political mobilisation as the aspects of movement culture usually focused on by RM theorists: interpretive framing, public discourse, and so, on. Lichterman contrasted the green group's *personalised movement community* with the *communitarian movement community* of the anti-toxic group. The former he characterised as a community that

accentuates individual responsibility and voice based on an ethic of 'expressive individualism' and a 'culture of fulfilment' in a collective setting. The latter he characterised as based on an ethic of collective effort and united membership, a community speaking with 'one voice.' He observed that attempts to merge these movement cultures failed. Ironically, the green groups considered their model of community as being the most conducive to building an inclusive multi-ethnic alliance. His concluded that the way groups bond (their patterns of togetherness), and the political practices that emerge as a result, are crucial variables in understanding how multi-cultural alliances may or may not form.

The themes of group bonding and group culture are explored in a unique study of coalition behaviour in Sweden. Abby Peterson's (1997) participant observation study of the anti-racist movement in Sweden investigates the evolution of what he calls 'neo-sectarian' social movement groups and their interconnection in 'rainbow coalitions.' Peterson characterises neo-sectarianism as a 'general social tendency where the search for identity through construction of ersatz communities has become a central project for individuals in complex societies' (Peterson, 1997: 127). The ersatz community meets the needs of people (particularly young people) in the fragmented conditions of contemporary society. The primary need to be met is a sense of belonging, a 'bund' of intense emotional attachment and identity, built on ideological commitment, cultural praxis (hip-hop music, fashion) and a politics of confrontation.

Rainbow coalitions (multi-cultural and ephemeral) come into being when such groups open themselves to the larger action environment compelled by the need to affirm their social and political aims. The rainbow coalition, defined as a 'temporary

belief space,' represents, 'concrete examples of the search for new ways of building bridges between walls of difference' (Peterson: 170). The central problem for such coalitions is creating an area outside of the 'hegemonic political space' of institutional politics that can accommodate a variety of ideologies, tactical approaches and identities that otherwise account for multitudinous differences.

Culturally-focused coalition studies theorise collective social movement practice that the 'structuralist bias' of RMT overlooks. It empirically investigates questions raised by the social theory approaches regarding identity, culture and politics outlined above. These studies borrow heavily from elements of NSM theory, particularly the work of Melluci. However, they are, like Downey's study, not antithetical to the rational choice and intentionality of RMT. Because identity and culture motivate political action, identity and culture ultimately inform questions of strategy.

#### *Political Economy and social movement coalitions*

Substantive studies of social movement action in the Marxist tradition are rare. NSM theory challenges orthodox Marxist interpretations of social change while preserving key elements of Marxist thought --particularly Gramscian theoretical constructs (Epstein 1990). Carroll and Ratner (1994) argue that although Gramsci held to the Marxist view of the capitalist class as the primary agent of hegemonic domination, 'his attention to culture and to the relatively autonomous institutions of civil society amounted to a rejection of the monodeterministic base-superstructure argument of classical Marxism' (p.21). Gramsci's assessment of the cultural dimensions of ruling class hegemony suggest that any counter movement must operate

politically at a cultural as well as at an economic level. The authors argue that Gramsci's notions of a 'war of position' and 'historical bloc' are conducive to understanding coalition-building as a counter-hegemonic process. In their 1989 study of British Columbia's 'Solidarity Coalition' they use a Gramscian analysis to reflect on the failures of a coalition of union and community groups that formed to oppose a raft of neo-conservative and reactionary legislation introduced by the 1983 Social credit government of premier Bill Bennett. The authors concluded that lack of open debate regarding tactical priorities and strategic objectives led to demands being made in an opportunistic way. The conjunctural defensive character of the campaign meant that no 'counter-hegemonic project' based on an alternative to fiscal austerity could flourish. The contingent basis of unity between the proletariat, radical left groups, new social movements and clients of the Keynesian welfare state unravelled when the leading labour unions negotiated a deal with the government leaving out all of the other partners in the coalition. The action of the BC Federation of Labour confirmed the lack of a counter-hegemonic project capable of holding the coalition together.

Carroll and Ratner's study did not include an examination of tensions existing at a cultural level between intersecting groups, particularly tensions arising out of contact between practices of the old and new social movements represented in the Solidarity Coalition. Bleyer (1992) does this in his study of the Action Canada Network. He argues that the difference between old and new social movements has been exaggerated by NSM theorists, saying that NSMs incorporate both elements of cultural revolution and protection of social consumption. There is more continuity between old and new social movements than NSM theorists allow. However, in his study of the anti-free

trade Action Canada Network coalition, he recognised that that there were different organisational traditions and decision-making styles which conform to 'new' and 'old' practices. For the coalition to succeed, 'bridge building' had to occur in order to link different groups. A co-operative horizontal style of leadership was agreed to by members and a structure adopted that modified the influence of more resource-rich organisations such as unions. The important point to note about this coalition was that new social movements were, no less than traditional worker's organisations, involved in a social justice campaign in an area of 'old' social movement political-economic interest. Furthermore, there was recognition that for successful coalescence to take place, and counter-hegemony to form, measures had to be undertaken to include the values and identities of different sectors of the left.

The political-economy perspective incorporates 'political process' elements of RMT by examining the balance of forces at a specific historical conjuncture. However, it goes beyond the realm of RM theory by situating social movement mobilisation relative to the productive and reproductive capacity of capitalism. Consistent with NSM theory, Gramscian political economy includes a cultural aspect to struggle. Moreover, the concept of historical bloc (which I will expand on later) provides a means of understanding coalition politics and their relation to social class --without reducing such politics solely to class-based explanations.

## The No! to APEC coalition and social movement theory.

The NTA coalition was an alliance of organisations from the radical/revolutionary sector of a number of different social movements in Vancouver. The APEC opposition in Vancouver constituted a movement as defined by Diani. But it was a movement of a specific kind. Like NTA it was a combination of different movements converging for a limited purpose: to demonstrate resistance to the APEC leader's conference. NTA developed a collective identity based on a framing dispute with the mainstream PS. The identity that set it apart from the PS was its refusal to engage with any institutional processes of consultation with government or indeed with any establishment institution apart from the media. Its actions, which centred on community networking and education, street demonstrations and conferences, included a mixture of conventional and unconventional acts.

While the actions of the coalition were purposeful, they had a high symbolic content and they were absolutely not designed to achieve representation of the coalition's interests within the established polity. They were premised, indeed the whole reason for the coalition coming into being was premised, on a show of defiance towards an inter-governmental organisation, APEC, which embodied a macro-structural process: 'imperialist globalisation.' Its collective action had two political dimensions, both of which Melluci describes as characteristic of new social movements; the first is that NTA's protest was oriented towards 'breaking of the system limits...(where) limits of a system indicate the range of variations tolerated within its existing structure' (Melluci 1985: 794-795); the second is that the form of the organisation as an expression of the movement --grassroots, egalitarian and militant-- was both medium

and message of its protest. As a symbol of resistance NTA set out to, in Melluci's words, 'challenge the dominant codes'--in this case the dominant codes of free-trade and globalisation. If NTA had any single purpose it was to build local and international resistance to the process of globalisation. Its purpose was not building resistance towards achieving any modification of the system --rather its mission was to solidify a network of like-minded forces interested in replacing the existing system with a non-oppressive one. While the goal of replacing the system could not possibly be achieved during the course of the campaign, the coalition's identity formed around a set of revolutionary aspirations.

The shadow of political science that hovers over RMT occludes the NTA experience. The coalition's marginal status, its unwillingness to engage with established political institutions and its emphasis on cultural expression rather than instrumental political action do not translate easily into a theoretical paradigm that emphasises hierarchy, centralisation, movement leadership and engagement with the polity.

NSM theory provides a more solid basis from which to comprehend the actions of the coalition because first, it is able, unlike RMT, to situate the goals and objectives of the coalition in a historical context (eg. Post-Fordism and globalisation) which goes beyond simple 'opportunity.'<sup>8</sup> Second, unlike RMT, NSM theory conceives of the importance of these goals and objectives as contributing to the formation of a collective identity without which NTA could not have acted politically. Third, NSM theory provides an insight into elements of the coalition's internal and external actions which

are not easily categorised as instrumental and are largely concerned with challenging 'dominant codes.'

NSM theory is, however, weak in describing the specifics of the immediate political environment (co-operation and competition with other groups, political opportunity structures etc.) in accounting for its mobilisation. It is also weak in evaluating how NTA's internal organisation, such as the generation and deployment of resources contributed to, or retarded, its stated objectives. RMT can compensate for these weaknesses by providing useful concepts with which to investigate the coalition. Specifically, these concern NTA's ability to mobilise and carry out tasks of organisational maintenance. A grassroots time-limited coalition like NTA is propelled by a 'coalitional logic' to deploy its limited resources towards realising its concrete objectives. This causes a dilemma: resources allocated in this way are diverted from the task of maintaining internal solidarity; weakened solidarity in turn jeopardises the attainment of concrete objectives. RMT's excursion into the cultural aspects of mobilisation (interpretive framing) is also important in understanding the coalition's development of collective identity --how NTA activists defined the coalition relative to other organisations is a crucial element in the overall story. The concept of collective identity will figure centrally in this study because, conceived of as an *action system* (Melluci 1989) it usefully combines culture and resource deployment as key variables in understanding activism at the meso-level of mobilisation.

Building and maintaining solidarity, is essential for a coalition to be successful. Creating a sense of unity in a coalition (or any SMO) is a cultural exercise since it involves creating a 'cognitive map' of the social and political world and the



programmatic place of the coalition within it. The coalition's cognitive map changes as its members grapple with their competing ideological and political priorities while searching for the best route through the changing landscape of external events. This mapping is a dynamic process that requires strategic decision-making and the deployment of resources preceding and during the coalition's active and 'visible' phase.

Without unity of purpose mobilisation is not possible and this study is concerned with identifying the organisational imperatives required to sustain it, as well as the weaknesses that tend to undermine it. This approach is familiar enough fare within RMT; however, unlike RMT, I do not elevate organisational dilemmas to a position of primary concern. The contents of the issues that the members of NTA grappled with are more than incidental. Their issues are linked to a specific historical time and place and in the spirit of NSM theory and within the framework of political economy, I draw some tentative practical and theoretical conclusions from the literature and from the findings of this study about the current state of mobilisation against capitalist expansion. In particular I look at the possibilities for building national and transnational coalitions in the present era.

Research on social movement coalitions is sparse. This is perhaps surprising given that coalitions are the rule rather than the exception during periods of insurgency. Most of the studies quoted above involve coalitions that are ad hoc in the sense that they come into being in response to a crisis or opportunity. However, with the exception of those featured in Peterson's study, they are not truly ad hoc because they tend to become permanent and to persist beyond the abatement of the reason for which they emerged. The present study attempts to fill a gap in the literature on coalitions in two ways. First,

it examines the problems of maintaining solidarity and a cohesive program during a period of intense mobilisation in a truly ad hoc and short-term coalition. Second, based on the evidence from a limited campaign against a potent symbol of advanced capitalism, it examines the implications for future cross-movement organising against capitalist expansion and consolidation. Both the Coalition's submerged and visible actions were affected by the phenomenon against which NTA's counter-hegemony was organised: globalisation. This is because the macro-process being targeted positioned members of the coalition, differently. A major challenge in maintaining unity was negotiating common purpose among the different histories, perspectives and priorities engaged in opposing the causes and effects of globalisation.

As outlined above, NSM theory and RMT encompass elements which can contribute to as complete a picture of the NTA campaign as is possible. While none of the coalition studies, apart from the Peterson research, clearly demonstrated NSM theoretical parentage, the social theoretical, cultural and political economy perspectives, combined include fundamental issues of identity, culture and macro-level processes addressed by writers in the NSM tradition. The political economy approach suggests that at a given historical moment forces drawn from a variety of popular struggles can coalesce to challenge the dominant political hegemony. The social-theoretical and cultural studies examine the problems that confront such a coalescence. The social-theoretical works address the potential conflicts that arise in the search for common ground among a multiplicity of histories, subjectivities and identities. The culturally focused studies examine the impact of tradition, history and ideology on the building of

collective identities and the problem posed to coalition building by the way individual groups 'come together.'

The 'given historical moment' in Carroll and Ratner's 1984 study is conjunctural. It is essentially the same as the moment of mobilisation opportunity provided by regime weakness or threat postulated by the RMT studies to explain the emergence of coalitions. The historical analysis of RMT extends only to the disposition of polity members vis-à-vis challengers, whereas, the political economy account situates conjunctural crises as moments in the long-wave or 'organic' developments of capital. Gramsci suggested that for a broad based movement to be successful it must adopt a strategic program that engages critically with the rhythms and edifices of capital (Gramsci, 1971:178). While this idea is entirely foreign to RMT, the work of Tarrow (1989) determines that protest occurs in 'cycles' which in a non-Marxist way acknowledges the ebb and flow of discontent keyed to political climate. Whether speaking of the rhythms and edifices of capitalism, or the ebb and flow of discontent, social movements engaging in conflict are made up of networks that sustain movements through the high and low points of the cycle of protest. I examine the literature on social movement networks in chapter 10.

In the study, NTA is presented as an organisation that emerged from a network of grassroots social movements that came together in response to a conjunctural event. NTA's collective identity galvanised around a political principle of anti-imperialism; however, this identity was never stable --not only due to the way that membership groupings were situated relatively to globalisation but because different perspectives were generated from the organisation's process of internal development. Buechler

(1993) argues that the formation of grievances and the articulation of ideology comes prior to any utilitarian calculation of the costs and benefits of action. However, once in motion, social movement organisations are tied to making decisions based on the deployment of resources --as Staggenborg's 1986 study suggests. What Buechler misses and what Downey's study confirms is that ideological debate and collective cultural definition proceed beyond the initial calculation of action. These elements exist in a dialectical relationship with the production of visible action. The outcome of this relationship can be observed in NTA's internal process of decision-making about strategy and about resource allocation throughout the cycle of protest.

The 'submerged networks' that Melluci claims serve as 'cultural laboratories' for the production of collective identities (Melluci, 1989: 60) do not cease to exist once action becomes visible. In fact, as the following research indicates, there is a continuous exchange of ideas, information and strategic evaluations that represent the views of the various activist communities involved in the coalition. Rochon and Meyer (1997) address one half of this equation, the pedagogical outflow from coalitions to the activist networks, but the authors fail to recognise the cultural flow of knowledge and assumptions that the coalition members bring from their respective communities *into* the coalition. These assumptions have their roots in what I call 'core allegiances' that are themselves rooted in different cultural and political histories (examples of which are cited in the studies conducted by Chang and Diaz-Veizades 1996 and by Lichterman 1995). Hathway and Meyer (1993) acknowledge the effect of diverse community input and point out that coalition member leadership is compelled to take account of constituent demands in working out the terms of 'co-operative differentiation' with

coalition partners. In their study, the notion of leadership is presented as unproblematic. In NTA the question of leadership *was* problematic, making co-operative differentiation difficult to achieve.

The distinction between leaders and constituents is part of the RMT tradition. This distinction is possible because RMT is largely confined to conceptualising social movements that contain formally or semi-formally structured hierarchical organisations with political objectives defined by interaction with the state. RMT is most at home investigating large-scale movement organisations engaged in prolonged campaigns --the coalition studies mentioned above are no exception. NTA was much closer in its constitution and tactics to the 'rainbow coalition' studied by Peterson (1997). In such coalitions, the distinction between leaders and constituency is not sharply drawn. These alliances could be more accurately described as 'temporary belief spaces' where submerged networks meet on a contingent basis. Such networks may or may not have identifiable leaders and the relationship of representation between coalition members and those outside of the coalition is highly ambiguous in many cases. In such conditions the focus of study is more usefully directed towards the challenges of establishing a working relationship among coalition members from the diverse historical, cultural and political backgrounds that people bring with them into the temporary belief space. The culturally focused studies mentioned above supply important pointers in understanding the nature of this challenge. This is not to say that taking account of leadership and direction-setting should be minimised. As the case of NTA demonstrated, where formal leadership of the kind studied by RMT has been replaced by prefigurative horizontal organisation characteristic of NSM structure, these

issues are never far away. They come back to haunt the aspirations of the democratic revolution, bringing into focus the dilemmas of co-operative differentiation.

This focus on internal organisation should not ignore the wider environment of coalition activity. The coalition's internal working relationship is continually evolving not only in terms of the internal process of intersectional dynamics but also in terms of the impact of external objectives and events on this process. As mentioned, one of the dilemmas faced by coalitions is the question of how much of the organisation's scarce resources (time, labour) should be directed towards either of two imperatives, first, pursuing the organisation's political objectives in an ever-changing external field and, second, maintaining accord among the divergent interests and identities that make up the coalition. Without a workable accord political objectives cannot hope to be met. On the other hand, too much resource expenditure on maintaining the accord detracts from monitoring and pursuing the organisation's political objectives. I investigated this dilemma in depth identifying NTA's organisational structures and processes --including formal and informal instances of both-- that made the dilemma more acute, or, alternatively, subdued its potential to disrupt the working of the coalition.

There are, then, three lines of enquiry developed in this thesis. The first concerns the problem of unity in social movement organisations and asks, 'what factors facilitate or impede the achievement of political and social solidarity in short-term ad hoc coalitions?' The second concerns the importance of social movement networks and asks, 'in what ways does coalition membership contribute to the strengthening or weakening of the social movement communities out of which they arise?' The third

asks, 'based on the experience of opposition to APEC, what are the prospects for building cross-movement and international solidarity?'

These questions will be explored at length with reference to the No! To APEC coalition and with reference to the larger APEC opposition movement. The last two questions are not as open to further empirical evaluation as is the middle-range cast of the first. True to Turner's typology, the last two questions are designed to be analytically 'sensitising.' They are intended to broaden the overall discussion to include a number of political and philosophical questions concerning the building of a sustained opposition to neo-liberalism and capitalist hegemony. The first question, directly aimed at the empirical data collected in this study is 'middle-range' in its scope in that it does not involve itself with the larger forces of social change except in as much as these intrude on the range of organisational behaviour examined. This does not mean to say that the data gathered is incapable of generating theoretical propositions; indeed, in chapter nine, conclusions congealed from the analysed data readily attach to abstract generalisations of the social world such as 'collective identity' and 'structuration.'

However, in the words of Gouldner, 'Middle range theory seeks to map, and seeks the propriety of mapping, the social world in a limited way --province by province, sector by sector. In so doing, it need not render explicit the larger maps of social reality that it may hold in subsidiary awareness' (Gouldner, 1970: 86). Questions two and three are aimed at broadening the scope of this thesis to include the larger map upon which NTA was a small feature.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter examines the methods used in researching the NTA coalition. I employed qualitative research methods, participant observation and interviewing to investigate the life of the coalition over six months. The first part of this chapter is a discussion of whether or not the research that forms the basis of this study can be called 'ethnographic.' The second part of this chapter describes the sources and processes of data collection and the third part examines the method of data analysis -- grounded theory-- used in the study. I end with a footnote on theory and method.

#### **Stumbling towards ethnography**

Upon reading the findings of this thesis, the reader will see that much of the research is based on material taken from tape-recordings conducted with members of NTA. She or he might reasonably conclude that, while qualitative, the data obtained from the domain of study is the result of interviewing, a technique employed in the research process, rather than a method that demands the 'being there' of field research. 'An ethnography is written representation of a culture (or aspects of a culture)' writes J. Van Maanen (1988:1). According to this definition what follows is an ethnography because it is one researcher's interpretation of a social realm of shared meanings and social action. However, what an ethnography *is* also depends on how it comes into being. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) define what the ethnographer does in the following way,



First the ethnographer enters into a social setting and gets to know the people in it; usually the setting is not known in an intimate way. The ethnographer participates in the daily routines of this setting, develops ongoing relations with the people in it, and observes all the while what is going on. Indeed the term "participant observation" is often used to characterise this basic research approach. But, second, the ethnographer writes down in regular, systemic ways what she observes and learns while participating in the daily rounds of life of others..... These two interconnected activities comprise the core of ethnographic research.... (Emerson Fretz and Shaw, 1995: 1)

My approach to data-gathering meets these criteria, because I spent six months getting to know the social setting and the people in it. I also made a great deal of field notes; however, apart from significant observations made at some of the coalition's meetings the findings do not reflect much of the everyday aspects that I was part of. The interview material seems to eclipse details taken from such records. This leaves the reader with the impression that I was simply a volunteer with the coalition who based his research on interviews with people I got to know.

This impression is valid but it raises questions about what the process and outcome of getting to know people, the difference between 'volunteering' and 'participating,' and the role of interviews in the ethnographic enterprise. As we have seen in the quote above, getting to know people is an essential part of field research methodology, and without being present in the setting for a prolonged period this could not have taken place. Furthermore, I chose the interviewees based on the principle of purposive sampling, that is, I chose people in a position to provide observations that 'will yield the most comprehensive understanding of (the) subject of study' (Rubin and Babbie, 1989: 344). Without having been present and interacting in the coalition, I would not have been in a position to choose such individuals.

However, the circumstances of my presence in the organisation and the way the coalition carried out its work had a negative affect on the gathering of data. As I mentioned in chapter one, there was a quid pro quo involved in gaining access to NTA. I could not participate without being a volunteer, and being a volunteer brought with it a number of drawbacks. Volunteers assigned themselves to committees set up to carry out specific tasks. This restricted my view of the coalition as a whole, not just because interaction with people on other committees was limited but because the demanding work of the Mobilisation Committee filled up much of my available time. The committee tasks that I undertook were most often carried out in solo. Coalition work was task-oriented and meetings, whether of individual committees or of the whole coalition, were business-like with little indication of the internal problems brewing beneath the surface (although, as we shall see, tensions did surface during some of the whole coalition meetings and notes from these meetings provided a rich source of data). Not only did the instrumental purpose of the meetings preclude tensions coming to the surface (as I discovered later) members were unwilling to discuss issues for fear of risking open conflict. The net result of all these factors was that I ended up with a lot of field notes that did not encompass coalition-wide dynamics and that were somewhat mundane. Thus, while volunteering certainly provided opportunity for participant observation, work pressures and organisational practices led me to participate in ways that did not increase the qualitative yield of my observations.

Although meetings --the main way in which NTA members came together-- did not provide a great deal of observational insight, I was nonetheless able to get a sense of which people did what, what organisations they belonged to --and I got important clues

about the issues that were causing tension within the coalition. As a result of 'being there' I was able to come up with a list of questions to ask those that I selected for interviewing. Without getting to know the organisation and the people in it, I would not have been able to come up with questions of the range or topicality that ended up on the questionnaire. Although interviewing was the only method that I had available to test what I thought might be going on beneath the surface of the coalition's everyday work, relying on interview material to the extent that I did was a disappointment. While interviewing is not uncommon in ethnography, and is even emphasised by some researchers (Jackson 1987), it is usually part of an ongoing process of different types of data-collection (Emerson Fretz and Shore, 1995: 9). Becker (1970) recommends that interviews be short, informal and part of the ongoing process of data-collection and analysis. By contrast, my interviews were concentrated within a short time-span at the end of the research period and they were guided by the use of a questionnaire.

Ethnographic interviews are often unstructured. 'An unstructured interview is an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in a particular order' (Rubin and Babbie 1989: 345). By emphasising the relationship aspect of interviewing, what Seidman (1991) calls 'phenomenological interviewing,' the researcher increases the chances of gaining access to the 'subjective understanding' out of which people create and interpret their social context (Schutz 1967). One of the disadvantages of this type of interviewing is that coming up with clear conceptual comparisons and linkages supplied by information from a range of individuals is a difficult task. Therefore, to help the interviewee and I focus on lines of enquiry that I

had developed during my time as a participant observer, I used a questionnaire. While the interviews were not as informal as those recommended by Becker, they did not stick rigidly to the schedule of questions. They were conversational enough that they belonged as much to the sphere of casual interaction as to the realm of formal interviewing. In other words, the interviews had features of the casual interactions that I had hoped to engage in as a participant observer but which had failed to emerge due to the conditions prevailing in the coalition.

In sum, while my work can be regarded as ethnographic, it is not altogether a satisfactory ethnography. It relied too heavily on interviews that, by their nature, reduce the full picture of what is going on. By eliminating usefully observed social cues such as non-verbal language and action observed in context, they are a useful but limited research tool. Furthermore, interviewees are susceptible to researcher bias to a degree that natives interacting in their 'natural setting' are not.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the interviews were not isolated events; they can be regarded as connected to my immediate experience of the coalition in as much as the areas that they focused on came out of that experience. Moreover, I was known by those I interviewed such that I was able to establish an associative relationship rather than being forced into a formal sociologist-informant relationship. This arrangement, combined with my having a good sense of the coalition's events, resulted in a rich set of data out of which I was able to capture the themes and processes at work in NTA.

## Data Collection and Initial Analysis

The field research for this project was conducted between May 1997 and January 1998. As a participant observer, I was actively involved in the NTA campaign from May to November 1997. I was a member of the Mobilisation committee (MOB) for the coalition's six month campaign. The MOB committee's role was to organise local organisations and networks to participate in NTA's campaign, march and rally. In addition, I attended most of the coalition's public events, the youth and students' conference, the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation (PCAIG), a number of protest events, including the march and rally, various public forums, and a press conference. I attended all of the MOB organising meetings, one meeting of the Research, Education and Media Committee (REM) and several Coordinating Committee (CoCo) meetings. I attended all of the monthly coalition business meetings and the final assessment meeting. I took field notes throughout this time, and during all of these events. As well, to understand fully the organisation's ideology, aims and objectives, I obtained information about NTA from its published material. This material included the monthly newsletter and various campaign related brochures.

I conducted fifteen two to three hour interviews with members of No to APEC, five with members of the centre group and ten with members of the non-centre group. Of the fifteen interviewees, five were men and ten were women. This gender ratio reflected, if anything, an over-representation of men in the interviewee sample compared to the ratio of men to women in the coalition. The activist group in NTA was predominantly female. Centre group interviewees were chosen according to two

criteria: first, the individual's degree of active involvement in the coalition; second, representation from the different groups within the Philippine Women Centre. Non-centre group interviewees were chosen with two criteria in mind: first, the degree of active involvement each had in the coalition, and second, to reflect the widest possible range of social movement constituencies claiming membership. The age ranges of those interviewed were as follows: 20-30 years (7) 30-40 years (4) 40-50 years (4). The educational experience of those interviewed was as follows: nine to eleven years of education with some high school (1); twelve years of school, completed high school (1); thirteen to fifteen years of education, some college/university (4); sixteen years of education, completed university (4); seventeen years of education, without completing a post-graduate degree (4); seventeen years of education, graduate degree completed (4); more than seventeen years of education (1). Of those interviewed, four described themselves as unemployed. Those who described themselves as employed gave no indication of whether or not they earned revenue from their employment. Of those who were currently employed, or had been previously employed, only one person occupied a position for which a university degree is required. All of those interviewed spoke of having been involved in social and political activism for the majority of their adolescent and/or adult lives.

In order to achieve a perspective of the APEC opposition beyond the boundaries of NTA's campaign, I conducted interviews with five respondents from the People's Summit and two interviews with members of APEC Alert, one of whom was a member of NTA. Another objective of these interviews was to gauge the degree to which NTA's collective identity, subscribed to by NTA activists, was consistent with

the views held of it by activists who were not members of NTA but who were part of the APEC opposition movement. The results of this exercise were used to evaluate the perception of competition or complementarity between the organisations, particularly between NTA and the PS. These interviews lasted between one and two hours in length. I also attended and took notes at three AA organising meetings, one PS organising meeting and one full-day event at the PS - the worker's rights forum. I attended the AA protest at the UBC campus.

I designed and used three sets of interview schedules for the interviews, one set for NTA respondents, one for PS respondents and one for the AA respondents. During the interviews I did not stick rigidly to the schedule but instead followed lines of questioning developed from what the participants said (Seidman 1991). This was particularly the case during the NTA interviews where I asked respondents to reflect on the NTA campaign. The interview questions were based on my field observations. They were also based on an exploration of the participant's subjective understanding of the campaign which often took the form of a free-flowing dialogue about specific events or incidents that the participant and I had both experienced. For this reason, the interview was as much an extension of my participant observation activity as it was a tool in its own right. Nevertheless, the interviews were not completely free-flowing -their focus was structured. All of those interviewed were asked questions from the schedule in the following areas: 1. activist history 2. NTA and the PS 3. involvement in NTA (internal politics of the coalition) 4. NTA and external relations 5. globalisation.<sup>10</sup> The questions asked were both open-ended and closed and were aimed at achieving an understanding of the meaning that people made of their experiences.

The interviews were transcribed and entered into a computerised database. The qualitative research computer program used to retrieve, assemble, and code the material was Folio Views 3.1. This program uses a series of levels, fields and highlighters to organise and categorise (code) material. Data were assigned to initial categories which were subsequently split into subcategories, or alternatively, spliced into more integrated overarching categories. The resulting categories were linked with each other. Whereas subcategorising and splicing initial categories is concerned with developing formal relations of difference or similarity, linking data is concerned with substantive relations of interaction (Dey 1993). The computer program can facilitate the process of linking by creating "hyperlinks" between different categories, where, for example, there appears to be a causal relationship between two events. However, in the case of this project, linking was achieved mainly through observing where different categories appeared to coincide or overlap. This was made possible by the computer program's facility for colour-coding fields.

I constructed a grid which showed the frequency of overlaps. For example, categories of democratic decision-making, democratic process, focus/direction, coalition consolidation, committee structure and work commitment demonstrated a strong convergence. In fact, so strong were the links between these categories that they appeared to form a cluster within the data as a whole. The single categories in the cluster were copied and assembled in one computer file where, through hyperlinking, they were subjected to a second round of analysis. This analysis suggested that the cluster dealt with various aspects of the coalition's internal politics. A second cluster,



not so clearly inter-linked as the first, but nonetheless immediately apparent, dealt with what I labelled local-international priorities/tensions.

These two issue clusters, internal politics and local/international priorities, plus a third --collective identity-- formed the basis of the study. The overarching theme of each cluster was then divided into analytical subcategories according to a grounded theoretical framework. Before describing this framework, I will mention a step taken which also serves as a foundation for the study. This step involved arranging the data in different ways according to the issue clusters involved. When examining the coalition's collective identity, I pooled the NTA data and examined the formal and substantive relationships between the ideas, memories and interpretations of the coalition members as a whole (collective identity is the conceptual framework around which the organisation formed and by which it operated). By contrast, I divided the data on internal politics and local-international priorities/tensions into two sections: data derived from interviews with members of the Kalayaan centre group and data derived from interviews with members of the non-centre group. My reasons for dividing the data in this way are based on: 1. impressions taken from my field observations that suggested social, political and strategic tensions between these two groups within the coalition -- these impressions were confirmed at NTA's final meeting, which I address below; 2. the data itself --which suggested two distinct sets of interpretations and evaluations of the coalition's history.

The two main research tools, participant observation and interviews were interwoven. As a participant observer, I was able to observe first hand the tensions that prevailed in the coalition. The observations and opinions expressed in the interviews

became evidence for or against my own speculative explanations of what was 'going on' during the campaign, and for or against those expressed to me by campaign participants. As Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) argue, theorising comes in at every point in the ethnographic process, and while the participant's point of view is not taken as fact, but as meaning constructed in a particular context, it gives a clue as to what seems to have been going on in a given location. When considering the two sets of interpretations about what was going on in the coalition --those of the centre group and those of the non-centre group-- my most important task was not to decide which of the two versions was the more correct or truthful. Both accounts were not only equally plausible but their plausibility was strengthened by the way each shared a close relationship with the other (i.e. each made better sense when linked to the other than if each had stood alone). My starting point for analysis, then, was not to decide on the veracity of either account but to account for why there were two versions. Later I was able to combine each version into a single story --the story of NTA.

That there *were* two versions was confirmed at the January 20<sup>th</sup> 1998 NTA final assessment meeting. A timeline of the coalition's achievements was presented at this meeting. After this, there was a 'round-robin' sharing where the 24 meeting participants expressed their opinions on the evolution, gains and losses of the coalition. All of the participants spoke of the achievements gained over 18 months of intensive political activism. As well as these commendations, a great deal of criticism emerged --most of it concentrated on the following items: the internal decision making process; a destructive fracturing among member interests; a lack of communication between different parts of the formally structured coalition; a lack of internal debate on

differences of ideology and identity. The conference design and content also received criticism. While the positive assessment was universal, the criticism came entirely from the non-centre group members. Much of the criticism appeared to be directed at the centre group. Although responsibility was not directly apportioned to that group, a non-centre group member made one reference to the 'core group.' After the criticism abated, one member of the centre group remarked, "*I may be getting the hit but that's all right.*" Although the atmosphere of the meeting was tense, there was no hostility, personal or otherwise, expressed --although this remark indicates that personal criticism may have been inferred. At the end of the meeting people voiced an interest in continuing to work together, although this plan did not subsequently transpire.

Following the section on collective identity, I have divided the report on the research findings into two parts, one dealing with the campaign perspectives and actions of the centre group and a second dealing with those of the non-centre group. The non-centre group was not a group in the way that the centre group was a group. Whereas those interviewed from the centre group were part of overlapping groups affiliated with the PWC, the non-centre group was made up of individuals who represented groups that did not necessarily work in close co-operation (Other than the centre group, there was only one other member group that had more than one participant working on a regular basis for the coalition). Nevertheless, as mentioned there was a strong convergence of viewpoints among the non-centre group such that they can, for the sake of the findings, be considered a grouping -if not a group (however, for the sake of brevity I will refer to them as a group).

## Analytic Framework.

The process of creating categories, linking these categories to subcategories and creating links between categories is carried out in order to extract the trenchant themes from a mass of unorganised data. To facilitate such a process, I have adopted an analytical framework as part of my method. In the following section I will describe the analytical approach used to arrive at an account of what happened during the life of NTA.

The findings are based on my own subjective understanding of the coalition and on the subjective understanding of the coalition members whom I spoke to or interviewed. Exploring subjective understanding offers the researcher a way of putting observed behaviour in context --it gives clues to the perceptions and cultural assumptions that individuals and groups use as they impute meaning to the social reality that they create (Lofland and Lofland 1984). In trying to make sense of these perceptions and assumptions, ethnographic description relies on the researcher's cultural interpretation which Geertz describes as "guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses" (Geertz, 1973).

In drawing such conclusions I have used what is called 'grounded theory.' This involves the researcher not starting a project with a pre-conceived theory in mind but rather, 'letting theory emerge from the data' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:12). Grounded theory attempts to systematically join categories of social phenomena which arise from the data. To do this Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest a framework which examines the relationship between structure and process:

Structure or conditions set the stage, that is, create the circumstances in which problems, issues, happenings or events pertaining to a phenomenon are situated or arise. Process, on the other hand denotes action/interaction over time of persons, organisations and communities in response to certain problems and issues. Combining structure with process helps analysts to get at some of the complexity that is so much part of life. Process and structure are inextricably linked....” (Strauss and Corbin:127)

By linking structure and process, the researcher investigates a relationship between circumstance and action. Action takes place under circumstances created by structure. The action and interaction of agents encountering circumstances created by structure/conditions may change those circumstances fully, partially or not at all. Changed circumstances in turn promote new actions or interactions. Strauss and Corbin, contemporary exponents of grounded theory, are remiss in not clearly suggesting how this takes place --how structure and process are “inextricably linked”. They do not fully explain the relationship between process and structure. If, as they maintain, the circumstances that actors encounter are the result of structure, one might expect that circumstances will not generally change unless structure changes. For this reason one might expect that actors wanting to change or reinforce their circumstances will direct their efforts towards changing structures. Rather than the thesis proposed by Strauss and Corbin that ‘process is what happens when people encounter circumstances imposed by structure,’ the relationship between process and structure is dialectical: “elements, things, structures and systems do not exist outside of or prior to the processes, flows and relations that create, sustain or undermine them” (Harvey, 1996). Process is not the outcome of structure; rather, structure is both a precursor and a product of process. In Chapter 9 of this thesis I will present Giddens’ theory of

structuration (1984) as a conceptual means of compensating for Strauss and Corbin's failure to fully elucidate the relationship between structure and action.

While Strauss and Corbin's definition of structure is vague at best, the authors do introduce a useful synonym for structure which links the concepts of circumstance and structure. When describing what is encountered by actors in a given social situation, they refer to 'conditions.' In making sense of data, they propose this term to mean that : '....conditions (are) a conceptual way of grouping answers to the questions why, where, how come, and when. These together form the structure, or set of circumstances or situations, in which phenomena are embedded' (Strauss and Corbin: 128). The authors emphasise that conditions are never just local --macro and micro conditions interact and intersect. Collapsing the concepts of structure and condition creates a flexible analytical device which operates on the premise that action and the consequences of action can only be understood with reference to the context in which they occur. What needs to be added to an operationalised use of the term 'condition' is Lofland and Lofland's insistence that social reality is imputed. In other words, for the researcher to decide what conditions made up the social context under study, s/he will be guided by the participant's definitions of the conditions that they were operating within - including the conditions provided by their own traditions, histories and so on.

Observing the dynamic and dialectical relationship between structure (conditions) and process provides the researcher with a framework with which to make sense of the issues and problems faced by actors in a given setting. Making sense of social context means understanding the actions taken by people in a social setting when they confront these issues and problems. A final step in the analytical process is

drawing conclusions about the consequences of these actions (and interactions). Such conclusions must take into account that actions have both intended and unintended consequences.

In the study of NTA, I have examined the conditions that the members of the coalition were working under --as they themselves interpreted those conditions. These conditions may be *causal*, as in a set of events that influence the phenomenon that they are describing, they may be *intervening*, events that mitigate the effect of causal conditions (typically happening unexpectedly), or they might be *contextual*, conditions or patterns that intersect to cause sets of circumstances (Strauss and Corbin:128). Under causal conditions I include culturally shared assumptions and perceptions which speak to traditions, loyalties and ideologies of the groups studied. Contextual conditions include the temporal, spatial and social dimensions of the immediate environment in which the actors are situated. Intervening conditions focus on the "telling moments" in the life of the coalition when a change occurred that altered the direction or impetus of the organisation.

While this schema is useful in giving structure to the picture presented, it should not become an end in itself, taking away from the fluidity of reporting the story. In this study my aim is to illuminate the different conditions which brought the coalition into being, and the context that these conditions created. I will examine the circumstances created by the conditions out of which issues and problems emerged. Following this, I look at the actions and interactions of the coalition members that occurred in response to these problems and issues. Finally, I examine the consequences, intended and

unintended, of these actions, and how the consequences changed or reinforced the issues and problems.

The findings address the foundation and substance of the criticisms raised at the final meeting. In chapters 5 and 6 I examine the perspectives of the two major groupings within NTA. The process of analysis follows this path: 1. identify the goals and agenda of each group --what brought members of the group into the coalition, and what they wanted to achieve as participants in the coalition. 2. identify the conditions under which the group organised which includes a) political traditions of the group b) view of the Canadian left c) view of the coalition's internal conditions. 3. clarify the actions taken by the group in pursuing its goals given the circumstances under which they were operating. My role of researcher is to bring to consciousness the assumptions and perceptions of the actors in the social field of which I was a part. This process of critical reflection demands what Lofland and Lofland (1984) call 'transcendence' or a stepping back from the situation to understand what is going on. One of the objectives of this exercise is to avoid assigning judgements of right or wrong to the opinions and perceptions presented by participants. However, inevitably, the interpretive process necessitates selecting some information over others. Interpretation involves the researcher applying his/her own good judgement in deciding the authenticity and veracity of claims made by respondents. As a way of testing the accuracy of my conclusions, I circulated the findings section to members of NTA in order to solicit feedback. My hope was that they would be able to find in the account some reflection of the reality that they were a part of. Their feedback was later incorporated into the revised findings.



## On Linking Theory and Method.

Chapter two is a synopsis of the theoretical perspectives with which I was acquainted before joining NTA. After joining, I was keen to apply what I had learned in graduate student classes to the 'case' of NTA. In true deductive fashion, I anticipated that NTA would fit into one or a combination of theoretical approaches. Concepts such as resource mobilisation and collective identity danced in my head. I tried to explain this or that event as an instance of one or another theoretical construct. As time went on, I found that this was not a useful exercise. I realised that the real story was being played out in the minute details of everyday interactions between people and that I was missing the significance of these details in an effort to find a theory to explain them. By the end of my time with NTA, the theories had all but disappeared from my mind and the details, including the detailed evaluations of NTA made by the interviewees, had become my main preoccupation.

Faced with finding a way through the clutter of details that I was left with, I decided that the inductive approach of grounded theory would serve my purposes better than returning immediately to the theories that seemed, after six months of concrete experience, to be highly speculative. I wanted to be sure that any theories about what had happened in NTA were firmly planted in the empirical data gathered. This is not to say that I entered into the systematic analysis recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998) with a blank mind ready to be filled with whatever came out of the data; however, by relegating RMT and NSM theory to the sidelines, I was able to develop some empirical generalisations, based on the testimony of the members and on my own

intuitions, about what happened during the course of the coalition's existence. From this account I was then able to advance to a different level of analysis by tentatively suggesting a relationship between variables such as collective identity, reflexive monitoring and resource mobilisation.

## Summary

In this chapter I have discussed different aspects of the methods employed in conducting this ethnographic research. While I have some concerns about the choice of interviewing as a research tool (my preference would have been to rely on field notes alone), the pace of NTA's political campaign limited opportunities for reflective discussion with participants. The semi-structured nature of the interviews may leave me open to charges of methodogenesis, in that there existed latitude for insertion of my own biases. However, the evidence from the transcriptions suggests that the respondents, all seasoned activists, loyal to their own political groups and perspectives, did not hesitate to present their views unmediated by my interaction with them. Over-reliance on interviews may leave the reader with an impoverished sense of what the coalition was like on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, I think that they truly reflect how the various actors in this social movement drama perceived, created and responded to the conditions prevailing in the coalition.

The data gathered in the field and in the interviews were subjected to analysis. Observations in my field notes were blended with material collated from the interviews to arrive at a story of the coalition. The analysis of the interview data started with a preliminary review to establish conceptual categories and subcategories of similarities

and differences among the ideas expressed by the participants. These categories were then linked to demonstrate substantive relationships of cause and effect and patterns of social interaction. Consistent with the principle of grounded theory, I discarded any pre-determined theoretical models which could be used to impose meaning on the material. I adopted a pragmatic analytical approach suggested by Strauss and Corbin which starts with the understanding that social processes are formed in the conditions that people find themselves. The formation of these processes is influenced by the conditions that people bring with them in the form of cultural 'road-maps'. Conditions, then, are not simply 'found;' they are interpreted differently by different groups and individuals and acted upon according to their respective cognitive 'road maps.' This central idea helped me to arrive at the 'big picture' of what was happening in NTA. The consequences of the actions and interactions of the two main groups within the coalition pushed the coalition in a particular direction. These actions were based on the assumptions and perceptions of the coalition participants as they wrestled with the problems and issues that came up. My main methodological task was to extract these assumptions and perceptions from over four hundred single-spaced pages of type-written text and a thick wad of field-notes. The reward for this effort was to come up with a glimpse of what happens when a number of groups and individuals come together on a short-term basis for a common political purpose.

While this study would not have been possible without the use of grounded theory, the empirical generalisations that it generated were not sufficient in themselves to provide a theoretical understanding of the subject at hand. Later chapters in this

thesis include theoretical insights drawn from these generalisations and macro-theoretical concepts that situate NTA in its wider political context.

## **Part Two: Findings Chapters 4-8.**

### **Introduction**

The findings of this study look at how the coalition came together and how it maintained itself through a period of protest. It examines the tensions and issues that arose in the course of its existence, paying close attention to the actions and interactions of its members. It concludes by looking at the outcomes of these actions and interactions and, in particular, at how the formal and informal structures of the organisation influenced the outcomes. Chapter four provides a factual history of the coalition covering its composition, formal structure and details of the events that it organised. Following this is I take a close look at what values brought the coalition members to an accord and at the parameters of the coalition's collective identity. Chapters five to seven look at what factors tended to divide the coalition and look, in particular, at the central schism that set the centre group apart from the other members of the coalition. Chapter five examines the campaign perspectives of the centre group, chapter six the campaign perspectives of the non-centre group, and chapter seven the tensions that existed between the two groups in the final phase of the coalition's campaign. Chapter eight presents an analysis of the actions, and consequences of the actions, taken by the different membership groupings. Also, this chapter reaches some tentative conclusions about the competing strategic and value orientations held by the two main groupings.

## ***Chapter 4: No! To APEC: History and Collective Identity***

### **History**

No! To APEC (NTA) was a coalition that protested the APEC Economic Leader's Meeting (AELM) held in Vancouver British Columbia in November 1997. NTA sprang from a women's "consciousness-raising" group and took its inspiration from the 1996 People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation (PCAIG) in the Philippines. It was in existence for eighteen months. In that time, it established a political position on the landscape of Vancouver's left relative to the other organisations opposing APEC. This position contained a critique of advanced capitalism that included a strong third-world perspective and which aimed to organise and represent the voices of Vancouver's marginalised.

Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) is an intergovernmental organisation composed of 17 economies in the Pacific Rim. Established in 1989, its goal is to establish a free-trade zone in the region by the year 2020. The regional consultative body of APEC includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and the United States. The leaders of the APEC countries meet on an annual basis. The meeting at the University of British Columbia on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 1997 was the fifth leader's meeting since the inception of APEC.

Other than the leader's meeting, the APEC process involves an on-going series of ministerial meetings and business consultations where the framework of the eventual free trade agreement is worked out. The AELM conducts a review of the progress being made on the framework. While the business sector is included as a full partner in the

APEC process, participation of other sectors is confined to a parallel meeting of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The parallel meeting is not directly incorporated into the APEC process. In Vancouver this parallel summit consisted of 'civil society' non-governmental organisations (NGOs)<sup>11</sup> such as human rights and women's organisations and was called the People's Summit (PS). It was partially funded by the Canadian Federal Government and was assisted with the provision of a meeting site by the B.C. provincial government.

The question of whether or not the PS could be considered a group opposed to APEC is central to the genesis of NTA. Officially, the PS did not take a position on APEC. The PS plan was as follows: resolutions arrived at in a number of issue-related forums set up to debate the advantages --or disadvantages-- of APEC would be combined in a joint resolution that would be presented to the AELM. As I will mention later, in the section titled "NTA's collective identity," many of the activists who joined NTA did so because they considered such a process to be an unacceptable position of "engagement" with the AELM. Engagement was seen by these activists to be tantamount to endorsement of the APEC process itself.

The position of "non-engagement" with APEC as a signifier of opposition to the official process had wider implications. APEC, according to NTA organisers, was evidence of a larger neo-liberal agenda consisting of trade liberalisation, economic privatisation, and deregulation. Furthermore, this neo-liberal agenda was part of an overarching process of imperialism. The concept of neo-liberalism as the project of imperialism at the stage of advanced capitalism was the master-frame<sup>12</sup> around which

the coalition was built. The slogan used by the coalition to express this concept was "Imperialist Globalisation."

This concept evolved from two main sources, one local, the Grassroots Women Discussion Group (GRWDG), an initiative of the Philippine Women Centre (PWC) and one international, the 1996 Manila People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation. The PWC was established in 1989 to organise Filipino women in B.C. and in particular the 6,000 domestic workers who have entered Canada under the federal government Live-in Caregiver Program. In Nov 1995 the GRWDG was formed by some members of the PWC. Their aim was to create an informal discussion group of local women activists to analyse the state of the women's movement in the Lower Mainland and to discuss the social condition of women in first and third world contexts. All but two of the women interviewed in this study were members of this group. Several mentioned that what distinguished this group from other women's groups that they had been in was its focus on connecting women's issues to questions of class, capitalism and globalisation.

Due to its focus on these topics, the Grassroots Women's Discussion Group became a natural springboard for organising resistance to APEC. In the spring of 1996, a decision was made to form the No! To APEC coalition and the basis of unity was written at that time. At this transitional stage, monthly meetings, often attended by up to 35 women, became the venue for discussing larger issues while smaller working groups, such as the one that designed the coalition's basis of unity (or constitution), concentrated on doing specific tasks. Until the official 'launch' at the Under The Volcano festival of arts and activism in August 1997, the forming coalition took on the



tasks of working out the logistics of the organisation, deepening its analysis of APEC, defining the frame of "Imperialist Globalisation" and working out its relationship to the PS.

At the time of the founding of NTA, four of the six initiating groups<sup>13</sup> were associated with one of the following: the politics of the Philippines, issues related to the world-wide export of labour from the Philippines, or to issues of concern to Filipino-Canadians. These groups are based at the PWC. Not surprisingly, a major impetus to the formation of the NTA coalition was the creation of continuity between the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation (PCAIG) in Quezon City Philippines in 1996 and the one to be held in Vancouver in 1997.

To understand the connection between the anti-APEC forces in Manila and those in Vancouver, a brief detour into the political landscape of the Philippines is necessary. There were five anti-APEC conferences in the Philippines in 1996 but the two most prominent were the Manila People's Forum and the People's Conference against Imperialist Globalisation held in Quezon City. The People's Forum was made up of NGOs and included the first 'International Women's Conference on APEC' which issued its own statement. The People's Conference against Imperialist Globalisation (PCAIG) was organised by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN or New Patriotic Alliance) which is a multi-sectoral united front of militant and progressive groups including the militant trade union organisation Kilisang Mayo Uno (KMU or May the First Movement), the peasant's organisation Kilasung Magbubukid ng Pilipanis (KMP), the League of Filipino Students and the alliance of women's organisations known as Gabriela. What distinguished BAYAN from the organisations hosting the People's

Forum was its stand on national democracy in the Philippines. The movement for national democracy in the Philippines is seeking a future free of foreign domination by imperialist powers such as the United States and Japan.<sup>14</sup>

The PCAIG argued that APEC was a 'tool of imperialism.' It took the view that any strategy involving attempts by civil society to influence the APEC process was wrong, because consulting civil society was itself an attempt by imperialist powers to gain the people's collaboration with imperialism: 'We denounce and oppose the subservient client states for selling out their people's interests. They connive with imperialism in promoting distorted concepts of "democratisation," "civil society empowerment" and "sustainable development" in a bid to disarm the people and co-opt their organisations into the imperialist stratagem.'<sup>15</sup> PCAIG took a rejectionist stand concerning APEC, whereas the People's forum, consisting of a plurality of positions on national democracy and engagement, did not.

A number of coalition member groups focused on issues pertaining to the Philippines and to Filipino-Canadians (from here on referred to collectively as the 'centre group'). The centre group had strong ties to the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation held in the Philippines and to BAYAN. The declaration of the PCAIG resolved to 'forge strong solidarity links among ourselves and with other anti-imperialist and progressive organisations to further advance the world's anti-imperialist movement.'<sup>16</sup> This goal served as a key factor in the formation of the coalition.<sup>17</sup> Despite the obvious parallel between the division that had occurred in the Philippines and that in Vancouver, NTA did not at first reject the idea of joining the People's Summit. Representatives from NTA attended a number of People's Summit meetings in

early 1996 to assess whether a partnership was possible. However, they decided that it was not.

NTA made a decision not to join the PS on a number of grounds. First, the People's Summit would not allow NTA to become a full decision-making member on its steering committee. The PS objected that NTA was not a nationally federated body -- even though there were NTA groups in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto (not to mention a number of groups in the United States). NTA concluded that the PS disqualified non-NGOs and non-labour organisations from important functions and decision-making. Representatives of the PS National Advisory Board met a member of NTA in Manila and attempted to overrule the decision of the local steering committee. The representatives offered NTA full membership in the Vancouver PS decision-making structure. However, by this time, NTA had started to organise its own independent campaign. Second, the NTA campaign that involved a prolonged campaign of 'grassroots' education --in the form of popular education and community conferences-- was at odds with the PS strategy. One NTA activist described the PS strategy as a "*one-shot conference*." Third, within NTA, the activists thought that adding one more voice to the 'marketplace of ideas' approach adopted by the PS was not the most effective way to get its message across. Lastly, with regards to the message itself, NTA's orientation to the problems posed by APEC was significantly different from the issue-based approach by which the PS was organising its event: "*For them, they deal with specific issues that APEC will have an impact on, whereas for us, the specific issues are simply an effect of globalisation,*" said one NTA activist.

Thus, NTA set itself apart from the PS by claiming to have an understanding of the social, political and historical mechanisms responsible for creating problems such as the exploitation of third world labour, unemployment, destruction of the environment and so on. Furthermore, it set out to target these mechanisms, capitalism and imperialism, in a politics of emancipation, a politics not explicitly stated in the program of the PS. One advantage of differentiating itself from the People's Summit in this way came down to a factor of efficiency. Having a singular, theoretically integrated analysis allows an organisation to establish a basis of unity around which a coalition can cohere.

A PS organiser who I interviewed made this point. The PS was a broad organisation traversing the engagement question from the rejectionist position of the International Women's Conference to the 'include a social clause in APEC' position of the Canadian Labour Congress. He reflected on the internal difficulties caused by this diversity noting that political questions had to be constantly reworked and revisited. He remarked, *"its nice to be involved in a group where you don't have to hatch out analysis all of the time, and you're only spending time on organising and outreach and things like that."* These words quite accurately describe the situation of NTA that, early on, developed a framework for a unified membership and which was able to deploy volunteer resources in a prolonged campaign (volunteers are the key resource of grassroots organisations). Undoubtedly, this was partly the result of being able to mobilise a constituency to action by articulating a political position made unambiguous by its contrast to that of the People's Summit.

The coalition's basis of unity stated this position succinctly. It called for exposing and opposing APEC and imperialist globalisation while strengthening

resistance to the same.<sup>18</sup> Organisations and individuals invited to become members of the coalition did so on the understanding that they agreed with the principles laid out in the basis of unity. NTA participants acknowledged that some members whose names appeared on the member list would be there more as a token of support than as assurance of active involvement. By October 1997 there were 36 organisations from Vancouver and Victoria registered as part of the coalition.<sup>19</sup> Of these 36 organisations, 14 organisations contributed activists to work on a full or part time basis. As well, there were a number of independent individuals who participated on a regular basis. In all, the numbers of core volunteers, those who participated for all of the campaign, or for substantial periods within it, averaged approximately 25 volunteers. Also, there was substantial assistance given to the coalition by volunteers on a short-term basis for particular events such as the youth and student conference, the women's conference, the PCAIG and for the march and rally.

The member groups represented a wide spectrum of organisations. The following groups made up the coalition:<sup>20</sup> 4 human rights groups; 6 women's support groups; 5 third-world solidarity groups; 3 local community groups; 3 socialist groups; 3 environmental groups (one of which was a political party); 1 anti-poverty group; 1 cultural group; 1 public issue research group; 2 groups providing integration of left activities in Vancouver; 1 settler's first-nations support group and 2 youth groups and 3 student groups. Two of these member groups were participants in the PS. One of the student groups was APEC Alert (AA) based on the UBC campus. This group became a major player in mounting opposition to APEC. As mentioned, four of NTA's member groups were Philippines solidarity groups or Filipino support groups. Between them,

they contributed the greatest number of activists proportionate to the number of groups in the coalition --about half of the core group of activists. The coalition also benefited from the use of the Philippine Women Centre. It acted as the co-ordinating location for NTA activities. Several members of the Centre Group mentioned the disruptive affect that having the coalition on the premises had on the centre's programs.

The basis of unity around which these groups came together was one important aspect of the structure of the coalition. The other was the committee system. There were four committees, the Fundraising Committee, the Research, Education and Media Committee (called REM within the coalition) the Mobilisation Committee (called MOB) and the Coordinating Committee (called CoCo). The fundraising committee was in charge of the finances of the organisation. REM was responsible for producing the coalition's newsletter, coordinating external and internal education<sup>21</sup> and organising media campaigns. Through its educational activities it played a key role in 'networking' for the coalition. MOB was responsible for organising public mobilisation, recruiting activists and networking. CoCo had representatives of all of the other committees sitting on it and was commissioned to act as the general logistical hub for the coalition. It was also responsible for preparing the 1997 PCAIG.<sup>22</sup> The committees operated independently and were expected to "make decisions within their competence and recommend these decisions through the Coordinating Committee."<sup>23</sup> CoCo was expected to relay the combined decisions of the committees to the coalition as a whole. At a monthly meeting of the whole coalition the decision-making process would be activated and the decisions discussed. The decision-making process was established by April 1997 and was included in a set of written guidelines in the same month.<sup>24</sup>

Decisions at the monthly coalition meetings were reached by consensus all of the time. However, the question of decision-making became controversial. Although the guidelines themselves were not subject to debate once they were established, they were nevertheless used as a point of reference by the centre group in regard to this controversy (see pp.159-160). This controversy, which concerned allegedly undemocratic practices, became a public issue only at the end of the coalition's life-span. Nevertheless, tensions concerning decision-making circulated covertly within the coalition for much of its existence .

The fact that these difficulties became publicly stated only after the coalition ended may be partially the result of the busy schedule maintained by the coalition. Above all, NTA was a hard-working coalition and action seemed to take priority over internal debate. Given its size and minimal resources, it achieved a lot in the time that it was active. NTA got its message across in several ways: through taking part in forums; doing popular education workshops, mainly with other grassroots organisations, at educational institutions and at a monthly "What the Heck is APEC? workshop held at the PWC; through presentations in educational institutions (secondary and post-secondary) and at a church; having display tables at community events and through mainstream and alternative media interviews and media conferences. Popular education workshops designed to give participants an 'in-depth' guide to APEC and imperialist globalisation reached 400 people during the course of the campaign. Many times this number of people heard the NTA message through the other forms of outreach.

The other tactics used by NTA to mobilise or consolidate support for its cause were through conferences and through protest. It held three conferences. The No to

APEC Women and Children's Conference was held by NTA in Vancouver from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1997 and attracted over 100 women. The conference, had speakers who included organisers working with trade unions, migrant workers, mail-order brides, first nations communities, youth and student groups, maquiladora workers and women in the sex trade. A speaker from an organisation called Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women-Canada, summed up the theme of the conference with the following words, "Free trade comes with a price, and increasingly, that price is paid by poor women in general and third world and migrant workers, in particular." The "Youth and Students Say No! to APEC" conference took place from September 19<sup>th</sup> to 21st 1997. It featured a range of speakers including a union organiser, a first nations youth organiser and student organisers. Once again, the theme was marginalisation and a number of workshops offered presentations on issues of importance to youth.

The People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation took place November 21-24th 1997. The conference speakers were representatives from South and North. On the Saturday Luis Jalandoni the international representative of the NDFP, and a professor of economics Dr Pao-Yu Ching from Marygrove College in Detroit, gave the key-note addresses. A panel of political organisers from Chile, Mexico, and the Philippines followed these speakers. In the afternoon, speakers from countries of the "North" gave speeches. These included Bill Lightbown from the Union Of B.C Indian Chiefs, Raymond Lotta from Chicago, a Maoist economist and member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, and Dr Harry Sharma professor of Sociology from Simon Fraser University. The following day, Nathaneal Santiago of BAYAN gave the morning address. In the afternoon, delegates attended workshops charged with



discussing, 'how to continue to expose and oppose APEC and imperialist globalisation and to build and strengthen strategies of resistance.' The conference's general declaration identified the main features of imperialist globalisation as trade liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation. It stated that the turmoil created by the collapse of the Southeast Asian economies 'exposed as rotten the much vaunted 'strong fundamentals' of monopoly capitalism.' It recognised that the non-exploiting classes of industrialised and non-industrialised classes suffer in common the effects of imperialist globalisation. It called for forging unity between national liberation movements in 'countries where imperialist globalisation takes its heaviest toll and the 'politically advanced elements'<sup>25</sup> in the United States and Canada. One hundred and eighteen, mainly international, delegates from sixteen countries attended. Seventy-six mainly local observers attended on the first day, nine on the second day and thirty-nine on the third day. Eighty-five NTA volunteers helped during the course of the weekend.

NTA also took part in a number of local protests, most notably the IWD march in March 1997. It also held its own protests. These included an anti-APEC rally at SFU in August 1997 and the disruption of a B.C. government youth tour called "Asia Pacific Connections." Premier Clark's opening of the youth tour at a Richmond Shopping Centre was disrupted by chanting NTA protesters. The largest protest was the "No! to APEC-Continuing the Resistance" march and rally which took place on November 25<sup>th</sup>. MOB planned this event over several months. This committee expanded in numbers of volunteers over time. It went from 2 to 3 members to about 15 to 25 by the time of the march. The march, that attracted about 1,500 people, made its way through downtown Vancouver, stopping rush hour traffic for approximately two

hours. The march stopped at sites of significance in the Downtown Eastside and downtown core. People from a range of organisations, mainly representing marginalised communities, spoke at these sites. The event was loud and militant in tone. Many of the international delegates from the conference attended the event.

Given the meagre financial resources available to the coalition (the fundraising committee raised \$5,000 through garage sales, admission to events etc.) and a limited volunteer base, the NTA coalition was remarkably successful in achieving the objectives that it set for itself. Strategically, the coalition established a radical critique of APEC and globalisation that set it apart from the People's Summit. Its basis of unity reflected this position. By doing so, it appealed to a cross-section of left groups in Vancouver who identified with its position. This paid off by attracting loyal volunteers. With the active support of volunteers and with solid logistical infrastructure, NTA kept up a strong momentum for its campaign. NTA established a basis of unity and an internal structure. This structure had both decentralised and centralised features and had a formal process for decision-making. It appeared to be sufficient to meet the needs of a hard-working coalition. The gains made by the coalition testify to this; however, there was no mechanism in place to assess the functioning of the structure as the work of the coalition proceeded. As a result, a significant number of coalition members accumulated grievances during their time with the coalition. Before examining the substance of these grievances and the divisions within the coalition, I will examine what brought the coalition together --the organisation's collective identity.

## NTA's Collective Identity

A coalition is an organisation consisting of different social or political groupings that ally to realise common objectives. A coalition cannot form without defining these objectives. This process starts with establishing the common ground on which the coalition members can collaborate. Collaboration is the first step in coalition building. It requires that members of the alliance make a public statement of the coalition's boundaries - those which set it off from other organisations in its field of operations. These include organisations it opposes, supports or has differences with. This process involves building what Melluci calls a 'collective identity.' A collective identity,<sup>26</sup> is an '...interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals concerned with orientations of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place....the process of maintaining and altering a collective identity provides the basis for actors to shape their expectations and calculate the costs and benefits of their action.' (Melluci, 1989: 34 ). In short, collective identity is about establishing solidarity on the basis of a strategic orientation towards a field of action. To discover the construction of NTA's collective identity, I interviewed NTA members to assess their view of the coalition's operational field. I also interviewed members of other organisations in this field as a way of providing, on specific points, some perspective of how NTA was viewed in return. NTA activists oriented their actions to the multi-organisational field of opportunities and restraints by creating an identity -albeit a fragile one. I will try to evoke this identity and then comment on its fragility.

To conceptualise what this identity might be, I will start by identifying the 'micro-mobilisation contexts' out of which NTA emerged. This network of organisations --what Melluci calls 'submerged networks' (Melluci, 1989: 73) with unstable memberships constituted the crucible for NTA's formation. A micro-mobilisation context 'can be defined as any small group setting in which processes of collective attribution are combined with rudimentary forms of organisation to produce mobilisation for collective action.' (D. McAdam, 1988: 134). Micro-mobilisation contexts are positioned mid-way between the individual and the larger political context in which s/he is embedded. Examples of micro-mobilisation contexts are existing political groups, religious organisations, friendship networks, and university campus organisations. These contexts serve as the bases for defining the method of collective action (D. Mc Adam et al 1988: 710) and diagnosing the problem, identifying the likely trajectory of the problem and designing a strategy to confront it -all of these stages being part of the 'framing' process (Snow and Benford, 1988). Such contexts 'serve as the "organisational staging ground" for the movement. They include personnel and networks of communication (McAdam et al 1988: 715). The purpose of describing the micro-mobilisation contexts of the NTA activists is to provide a backdrop for the basis of collaboration in the coalition. To do this I will mention a few initiatives and projects of the Vancouver left which preceded the NTA coalition, and which many of the core group of activists reported having had some contact with --or were directly involved in organising.

First, five network integrating organisations of note are the La Quena Coffee House collective, the Vancouver International of Hope, Mayworks, Under the Volcano

and the International Women's Day Committee. La Quena is a non-profit collectively run café on Vancouver's Eastside which acts as a public meeting place for a variety of community and social movement groups. The Vancouver International of Hope formed in 1996. Inspired by the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas Mexico it held a series of community workshops bringing together different groups with the intention of organising resistance to the 'neo-liberal agenda.' Mayworks and Under the Volcano are annual events that combine culture and activism. The IWD committee organises Vancouver's annual women's march. Another network of significance to the coalition was the Philippines solidarity groups in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and in the United States. Like the centre group in Vancouver, these groups, which are also supportive of BAYAN and the NDFP, spearheaded the creation of similar anti-APEC coalitions in their various locales. These groups are in regular contact with each other. Third, the strong presence of youth and student groups in the coalition reflected the large number of youth having links to organisations in educational institutions. Finally, the key importance of the Grassroots Women Discussion Group to the formation of the coalition testifies to the central role played by the women's movement in providing networking and direction for contemporary radical politics in Vancouver (not to mention the rest of the world). These social movement organisations formed the interwoven matrix of micro-mobilisation contexts out of which the NTA coalition emerged.<sup>27</sup> They can be regarded as NTA's alliance system, the networks of activists out of which the coalition emerged and into which it dissolved. The important relationship between coalitions and networks is explored in chapter 10 of this thesis.

Other writers suggest that another level of organisation is necessary to complete the conceptualising of a bridge between micro and macro contexts. These organisations are 'mesomobilisation actors' who 'coordinate and integrate micro-mobilisation groups' (Gerhards and Rucht 1992). Thus, the various background organisations and member groups of the coalition can, for the purposes of this study, be regarded as micro-mobilisation contexts while the coalition, once established, may be regarded as a mesomobilisation actor. In its mesomobilisation role, NTA served as the co-ordinator of the member groups in the campaign of action.

Micro and meso-mobilisation contexts generate meaning in the process of building consensus for action. As a mesomobilising actor, NTA became involved in 'developing a common frame of meaning to interpret the issue at stake' (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992: 559). The motif of 'imperialist globalisation' was at the heart of this framing exercise. As mentioned in the history section, integral to this process is the diagnosis, and prognosis of the problem, followed by a rationale for acting. Locating the problem (APEC) in relation to the universe of social and political power (imperialism) was an immediate and on-going task. This universe consisted not just of the larger forces to which NTA was opposed but also of the immediate social movement environment. The appraisal, shared by NTA members, of these elements in the political field, formed the heart of the coalition's solidarity.

Movements are set in a 'multiorganisational field' of the mass media, government authorities, competing or complementary movements and countermovements (Klandermans, 1992). Alliances form most often when alignment of the field constitutes a perceived threat or presents a perceived opportunity to achieve

movement goals (Zald and McCarthy, 1980). What, then, were some of the elements of this field that constituted threats or opportunities for the activist organisations and individuals whose response was to join NTA?

The short answer to this question is that the Federal Government's decision to hold the APEC conference in Vancouver provided an opportunity to confront the threat to social and economic democracy posed by globalisation. All 21 of the activists that I interviewed associated APEC with globalisation. Most saw it as a free-trade agreement similar in design and intention to the U.S-Canada Free Trade Agreement and to the North American Free Trade Agreement. The activists saw it as an attempt by APEC member governments to strengthen both transnational corporate control of trade and the national agendas of the Asia-Pacific nations. The activists from the broad opposition movement regarded APEC as part of a world-wide network of similar measures. It served as a symbolic lightning rod for local opposition to such control, *"It was like the gauntlet was thrown down, when you found out that APEC was being hosted by Vancouver,"* said one activist.

The following is an account of the ways in which NTA activists saw the gauntlet being thrown down or taken up by various groups in the multiorganisational field of which it was a part. The main actors in this field were: the Canadian government, the media, APEC Alert (AA) and the People's Summit.<sup>28</sup> By analysing the views of this field held by NTA activists, I arrived at a representation of NTA's positioning on the spectrum of political action. I will argue that the identification of this space by those who occupied it, is a fundamental factor illuminating the coalition's collective identity.

*The Institutional Actors: Government, Business, the Police and the Media.*

NTA activists collaborated first and foremost in opposition to the government and to business. A show of opposition to APEC was not seen by NTA activists as an attempt to get the institutions of business or government to change the agreement. Rather, the stance of opposition had two purposes, first to send a signal of defiance to the government, as one activist put it, "*to draw a line,*" and as another put it "*to let them know we are here.*" However one activist thought this defiance "*indirectly put pressure on the government.*" The purpose of NTA's opposition was to educate public opinion towards a rejection of APEC and a re-evaluation of globalisation. As a token of this opposition, the coalition made a decision to not seek government funding for its campaign, as the PS had done.

The relationship of the government to NTA consisted of a sustained interest by the state authorities in the activities of the organisation. The police called the centre on a daily basis for almost two months towards the campaign trying to get information on NTA's protest plans. They sent a notice advising the coalition that it would infringe a local by-law if it did not obtain a permit to hold a march. Three weeks before the conference the Department of External Affairs refused entry to a number of conference delegates. In response, the coalition was forced to mount a publicity campaign to obtain visas for its guests. In short, the relationship between the coalition and the government was one of distance and antagonism.

NTA's relationship to the mass media can best be described as one of ambivalence. NTA wanted to use the media to get its message across. It held two press



conferences, one at the Vancouver 'launch' of the coalition in March and one in October to announce details of the conference and march. NTA received a mixed response from the media. One REM committee activist mentioned that two media outlets would not cover NTA because they thought NTA was a group of 'communists.' However, there was greater interest shown by the media as the AELM approached. Various outlets responded to press releases issued by NTA regarding the External Affairs visa-denials. The media did not report NTA's analysis on globalisation and imperialism. NTA activists were frustrated by this but not surprised --they explained the media's bias in terms of media ownership and editorial policy. Most activists expected that, at best, NTA's anti-APEC position would be reported, if not its broader analysis.

The media met this expectation but they focused more on the 'split' between NTA and the PS. Inadvertently, a strategy adopted by NTA may have contributed to this. Two activists mentioned that in the face of anticipated hostility or indifference by the mainstream media, the REM Committee decided on an approach to the media which represented the coalition as the 'true opposition' to APEC. At NTA's news conference in October 1997 a NTA organiser described the forthcoming PCAIG in the following terms: 'unlike the People's Summit, it is a counter-conference, exposing the roots of imperialist globalisation.' During the question period, I observed the following exchange:

*Media: There are many people in the PS who are as opposed to APEC as you, how can you say that they are going along with APEC?*

*NTA: The historic roots show a clear break in the alignment of our respective positions. We believe that it is futile to struggle for social clauses. We rely on the strength of the grassroots to organise. We are*

*receiving no federal or provincial funding, we believe our conference is the genuine people's conference.*

*Media: But are the people in the PS who are passionate in their opposition.... are you saying that they are misguided?*

*NTA: I can't speak for the PS. There are a range of positions within the PS. Some of them are misguided. We are concentrating on our own organising. People in Asia are dying as a result of their government's actions, they are facing evictions from their lands....we have no choice but to take a stand.*

NTA tried to distinguish itself from all the other actors in the multiorganisational field. In light of this strategy, NTA decided to stake an unequivocal position for itself.<sup>29</sup> It did this by contrasting itself to the engagement position of the PS and to, as one activist put it, "*stick to our principles.*" While maintaining the integrity of NTA's message this strategy led the media to focus on an apparent conflict between the organisations rather than on the issues at hand.

NTA activists were sceptical of the role played by the media in the development of the coalition: one felt that the mainstream media was more in tune with the PS due to its line-up of well known speakers; another felt that the absence of media coverage of the march was of secondary importance to the experience of solidarity gained by the marchers themselves; a third, in the light of the media's proclivity for highlighting conflict over substance, questioned whether the mainstream media was even a useful tool to create a strategy around. Most felt that the alternative media, such as Co-Op Radio paid more attention to --and gave fairer representation of-- NTA's objectives.<sup>30</sup>

NTA's relationship with the media was problematic. The reluctance of NTA organiser's to 'court' or 'play' the media seems to have arisen from a starting point of

doubt that the media would be sympathetic to its cause. This doubt arose from the fact that the coalition, unlike the PS, occupied an ideological space beyond the limits of the media's normal range of included ideologies. Nevertheless, NTA did have a strategy to project its position in the public debate created by the APEC Summit. This position, of non-engagement and of solidarity with both third world struggles and with the marginalised of Canadian society, was consistent with the coalition's core beliefs. As a result, this strategy caused no dissension within the coalition (although one activist noted that NTA compromised the validity of its claim to be the 'true opposition' because there were obviously APEC opponents in the PS). The media component of the coalition's campaign was a measured response to the opportunities and restrictions of the political environment. It also made public the outlines of its collective identity.

*The Other Social Movement Organisations: People's Summit and APEC Alert.*

The views held by NTA activists of the other social movement actors in the APEC opposition were complex. I have divided up the data into three categories that demonstrate points of difference identified by NTA activists between NTA and these other actors. These are as follows: a) differences in political analysis and framing b) differences in strategy and tactics employed by NTA, AA and the PS c) structural and cultural differences attributed by NTA members to the personnel of AA and NTA:

**a) The perception of difference: analysis and framing.** NTA activists identified different political orientations between NTA and the other movement actors. The two major oppositional groupings which occupied the coalition's political environment were the PS and APEC Alert (AA), the latter being a member of NTA.

Like NTA, AA took a rejectionist stand and was opposed to the position taken by the PS. It was operating on a different terrain to that of NTA, mobilising students on the campus of the University of British Columbia where the leaders' meeting was to be held. An original organiser with NTA was instrumental in starting AA. He linked up with a student campus group that had been conducting an anti-corporate campaign on campus. AA came into full operation on campus in September of 1997.

Given that AA was a member of the coalition, one might expect that NTA activists would perceive little difference between the diagnostic framing and ideological orientation of AA. However, there were significant differences identified by NTA activists as to how the two organisations framed the issues. NTA activists viewed AA's campaign as too focused on protesting human rights violations. One activist saw this as a "liberal" approach to the expression of opposition, another as too narrowly focused given the complexity of globalisation, and another as simplistic for the same reason. One NTA activist observed that the focus on human rights was a strategic rather than an ideological decision.<sup>31</sup> This same activist also pointed out that AA, like the PS, did not have an analysis of imperialism as part of its project and as a result was limited to focusing on regime leaders rather than on the imperialistic strings that controlled them. Two AA members that I interviewed confirmed that they deliberately did not use the term 'imperialism' in their campaign, although they claimed that the ideas they incorporated were commensurable with the concept.

NTA activists criticised the PS for not including imperialism as a framing concept in its analysis. One activist saw the PS focus on human rights as shallow --it did not examine the underlying causes of human rights abuses. A more serious charge

advanced by NTA activists was that the PS was complicit with imperialism, that it accepted globalisation as inevitable, or even natural. According to these activists, NTA had a better grasp of the 'big picture' because it challenged such taken-for-granted assumptions. Thus, while NTA activists criticised AA for having too narrow a human rights focus, they criticised the PS for the same but with more evidence presented that this focus was fundamentally the result of not grasping the dynamics of globalisation. Furthermore, the shallowness of this analysis led PS organisers to believe that the problem with APEC, and by extension globalisation, was mere exclusion of 'civil-society' from policy-making. To argue for inclusion in the APEC process, was nothing short of legitimising APEC and therefore the economic forces underlying it. NTA members cast the PS as the official, or even 'loyal' opposition- the "*acceptable face of APEC*" as one activist put it.

**b) The perception of difference: strategy and tactics** NTA activists viewed the campaign tactics of NTA and PS as similar, with one major exception being the pursuit of community outreach. NTA and the PS chose similar formats of protest. Both held a series of conferences<sup>32</sup> and a march to culminate their campaigns but NTA activists believed that NTA had a protracted campaign of community outreach that the PS did not. This was expressed by a number of NTA activists as a "*step-by-step approach*" in comparison to the PS approach which relied on one major event and media exposure to mobilise support.<sup>33</sup> With this exception --which was profound given the salience of the view held by NTA activists that the coalition was more 'grassroots' than the PS --there was little critical comment made by NTA activists about the PS tactics.

NTA activists regarded AA as solidly anti-APEC. However, NTA and AA differed in their tactical approach. NTA activists were unanimous that AA's use of non-violent civil disobedience was confrontational compared to the more educational approaches of NTA or PS.<sup>34</sup> Similar to their perception of the PS, NTA activists thought that AA did not adopt a protracted campaign of education.

Instead, AA was seen by NTA activists as incorporating a more spontaneous plan of action than NTA. Some criticised AA's use of direct action as "*elitist*." According to this criticism, direct action is based on the questionable premise that a small group of activists can influence social change. AA's direct action amounted to nothing more than, as one activist put it, "*tactical radicalism*" which failed to build a mass movement. Such action radicalises --but only in the short term. Furthermore, the police brutality that resulted from the student's actions was not connected by AA activists to the 'deep' issues of globalisation.

By comparison, NTA activists characterised the coalition's approach as mass action aimed at building community support for its program (although one activist conceded that the march which backed up the campus action was evidence that AA had done considerable groundwork on campus). Many of the NTA activists commented that AA's direct action tactics were evidence of a well-planned and successful media strategy. Some NTA activists praised AA for its 'media savvy.' While there was criticism of AA within the coalition, this criticism was not overt and as one activist put it, "*there was license and respect between AA and NTA.*"

**c) The perception of differences: structural and cultural.** The differences in analysis and in strategy and tactics between NTA and AA and between NTA and the PS,

had, according to NTA activists, a foundation in what might be described as an 'ontological ensemble' of structural and cultural variables. NTA activists strongly identified the coalition as a 'grassroots' organisation representing the voice of the 'marginalised.' This identification appears to have been a major reason why many were attracted to becoming members in the first place. By contrast, NTA activists identified the PS as "*not grassroots*" and as "*middle class*,"<sup>35</sup> representing, as one put it, "*the respectable left*." By comparison to NTA, they characterised the PS as having a hierarchy at the top of which were "*union bureaucrats*," "*women's movement bureaucrats*," or as one activist put it, "*big names, like more liberal activists .....the people who when the radio needs a quasi-left-wing person, that's who they call up*." One activist described a PS meeting in the following way: "*...like that's bureaucracy, hacks, paid political organisers being around a table like for an hour its all very regimented and they give their orders to secretaries and things*." Not surprisingly, a number of NTA activists connected the apparent privilege accorded this strata of the left to the PS position of engagement. Such a strata, they argued, is motivated to preserve the system which had served it well.

While none of the AA activists were accused by NTA activists of wanting to see the system preserved, they made a number of attributions characterising AA adherents as different from members of NTA. Given that the tactical approaches of NTA and AA were highlighted for difference by NTA activists, political and cultural attributions of AA activists were often connected to events staged by that organisation. The spontaneous and creative nature of AA actions were seen to be evidence of the vitality to be expected of young people --particularly those inclined towards anarchism.<sup>36</sup> Less

positive attributions concerned gender and the influence of the dominant North American culture. One NTA activist identified “*heroic*” males and another identified “*angry white males*” posturing in “*cool*” direct actions as being typical features of the AA campaign. Others saw evidence of “*North American immediate gratification*” and “*libertarian*” or “*individualistic*” values held by AA activists. Despite these criticisms a number of favourable remarks were made about the AA members. They were seen as “*committed*” and successful at exerting pressure on the powers-that-be. No such compliments were forthcoming about the PS organisers.

#### Variation and middle ground

The foregoing analysis suggests that NTA activists constructed a collective identity which unambiguously differentiated the coalition from other organisations in the multiorganisational field. The boundary drawn around this identity relative to other organisations was necessary to keep the coalition together but it was not sufficient to provide a collective ‘we’ within the organisation. While a sense of NTA’s unique position in the multiorganisational field underlay the basis on which its members collaborated, this collective identity did not constitute a point at which the individual activist felt her or his own personal identity meld with that of the organisation. One activist summed up why this was the case for her, “*I went to NTA because I perceived it as activist, but politically there were too many political differences for me to actually think about being with the coalition.*” These political differences resulted in very little variation of opinion among NTA activists when defining the boundary between NTA



and the government or business. However, these differences produced variation among NTA activists regarding how they perceived other social movement organisations relative to the coalition. For some NTA activists the boundaries dividing NTA from other actors in the APEC opposition movement were solid, for others they were malleable.

Of the PS and AA, NTA activists were the least critical of AA. However, there were variations in their critiques of AA's analysis and campaign --some reflecting negatively on NTA's performance as an organisation. For example, one activist thought that NTA had missed an opportunity to reach a more general audience by not focusing on human rights in the way that AA had done. Another NTA activist who had attended some AA events noted, with approval, more discussion of identity related issues within AA than within NTA. As mentioned above the criticisms of AA's actions were accompanied by acknowledgement of its achievements. However, these positive acknowledgements did not modify substantial differences between the two organisations attributed to them by NTA activists.

That there were differences between the two organisations was confirmed by the AA activists whom I interviewed. Both saw NTA as employing a more traditional approach to campaigning and protest than AA. Both identified a more hierarchical structure existing in NTA than in AA. AA had consciously chosen a horizontal 'process' oriented decision-making model. The activists confirmed that issues of identity, gender and ethnicity in particular, had arisen during the campaign. For example, AA women had caucused to find ways to confront overbearing male behaviour within the organisation. In the two examples given above, human rights and identity

issues, two NTA activists stated that AA had features to its campaign lacking in the campaign of NTA. By contrast, NTA activists identified no such features worthy of emulation in the campaign of the PS.

Nevertheless, while the perceived differences between the PS and NTA were central to the coalition's origins and maintenance of its collective identity, there was no absolute unanimity of opinion on the extent or character of these differences. This division of opinion within NTA became more pronounced as the AELM drew nearer and the presence of substantial anti-APEC sentiment within the PS became more apparent. For example, the title of the PS women's conference was "The Second International Women's Conference *Against* APEC" (my italics). Also there were considerable anti-APEC forces within the International Forum: Workers Rights and Democratic Development. (As evidence that there was no unanimity of opinion within the PS, the final declaration of the PS did not include a unified engagement position).

As a result of incongruities between these aspects of the PS and the 'official' NTA view, a number of NTA activists cast doubt on some of the key assertions made within NTA about the PS. In the light of a strong anti-APEC contingent within the PS, some NTA activists viewed as exaggerated NTA's claim to be the 'true opposition'. One even stated that the PS played a critical role in representing the opposition of a particular part of the spectrum of the left. In this respect a number of activists regarded the PS as being complementary to --rather than competing with-- NTA. One activist cast doubt on the notion that the PS was a "*wishy-washy umbrella group*" and he regretted that there was a mutual stubbornness between the two groups in recognising the work of the other. Thus, while incorporation of the analysis of the PS as a body

against which NTA defined itself as 'different' remained intact throughout the life of the coalition, the research data shows that, in reality, there was less of a polarity than might have appeared to be the case at the outset of the coalition. There were, in short, NTA activists, all members of the non-centre group, who identified intermediary positions between NTA and the PS. This identification amounted to a recognition by those activists that both NTA and the PS were credible organisations

PS activists whom I interviewed also recognised common features between the two organisations and between their campaigns. A union organiser described NTA and the PS as being "*in the same army, different divisions.*" A representative of the Council of Canadians said that the engagement/non-engagement issue was not as black and white as it was presented. He described the differences among all of the groups organising around APEC as being one of how much emphasis each put into different parts of a common strategy which involved the following elements: sending a message to the government; educating the public; making international connections and using the media. On the NTA-PS split he commented on the "*minute*" differences separating the two organisations, "*when you compare our positions with that of APEC and that of the business leaders in there, I'm sure the business leaders would have a hard time trying to figure out the difference.*"

There were, however, some comments made about NTA by PS organisers that were critical and indicated dissimilarities between the two organisations. For example, the Women's Conference organiser spoke of the PS as representing a wide range of groups and she criticised NTA for claiming that it was the only group "*truly opposed*" to APEC. She remarked that invitations to the Women's Conference were turned down

by NTA. The primary reason given by this activist for the women's conference not joining forces with NTA rather than the PS, was that NTA was not a national body, that it was a marginal faction, and that although the Women's Conference took a similar position to NTA, they had chosen to fight the social democratic tendencies in the PS "*from the inside.*" Three of those interviewed spoke of NTA as not being open, of being dogmatic or as one activist put it, "*hard to engage with.*"

The dissenting views of NTA activists and the political positioning of NTA described by PS activists together suggest that the political boundaries between the organisations was not rigidly defined. NTA activists identified a middle ground where the goals and strategies of the PS and NTA met. This apprehension did not undermine the coalition's collective identity; however, it did lead some NTA activists to question the fundamental assumptions that the identity was based on. The differentiation between AA and NTA was not fundamental to building the identity of NTA --AA was, after all, a member of the coalition and as such was seen as an ally. Nevertheless, qualities associated with AA, its radical democratic structure, anarchistic spontaneity, its unconventional and confrontational tactics, represented characteristics not present in NTA. In certain cases the absence of these characteristics in NTA signified to NTA activists a deficiency in the coalition, calling into question the underpinning of NTA's collective identity. In other cases, the absence confirmed the difference agreed-upon by NTA activists between NTA and AA. The similarity or contrast, presence or absence of certain features in any one of the organisation's campaigns relative to that of another illustrate tensions which exist on the left between different traditions, practices and

ideologies. What separates these organisations is also what maintains them over time -- identities built on the political forces released by these tensions.

### Summary

By presenting these findings, where NTA activists attributed differences between NTA and the other major actors in the APEC drama, I have tried to come to an image or identity which NTA activists held of themselves. This identity served as an orienting device for NTA activists as they pursued their activities on behalf of the coalition. While this identity held together for the duration of the coalition's existence, it became fragile as events inside and outside of the coalition weakened its coherence.

NTA activists joined and perpetuated the coalition on an understanding that it operated on the periphery of Canada's body politic. This positioning was premised on an outright rejection not just of APEC, but of the hegemonic role of the ruling institutions of Canadian society. The coalition's willingness to involve the mainstream media as a means of communicating its counter-hegemonic stand suggests that NTA occupied a space peripheral to, rather than outside of, the body politic. That NTA did not become drawn into a more mainstream position by its use of the media was the result of the media's exclusionary response to the presence of unorthodox ideological discourses within the coalition. Also, NTA remained relatively uncovered by the mainstream media because it made a conscious choice not to use dramatic tactics (such as those chosen by AA) which would attract attention to its campaign. However, in one respect NTA inadvertently became an actor in a media construct: the decision to maintain a critical peripheral position by 'sticking to its principles' played into the

media's interest in exploiting the division between NTA and the PS. While this exploitation diverted attention from the issues important to NTA, it nonetheless gave public exposure to one aspect of the coalition's collective identity.

The division between the PS and NTA was a primary contrivance, devised by NTA activists, for drawing a boundary around NTA's collective identity. NTA activists clearly saw the coalition as the revolutionary alternative to the reform-orientated PS. NTA activists accused the PS of colluding with the ruling institutions, and it was seen by some members -but not all- as a phoney opposition to APEC. NTA reserved for itself the status of the authentic militant foe of APEC. The roots of this adversarial identity went deep and were, from its inception, international in scope. NTA brought together groups that subscribed to the belief that an overarching system of oppression was responsible for the continued subjugation and immiseration of working and marginalised peoples of North and South. In representing a voice for this constituency, NTA framed itself as an agent for fundamental emancipatory change.

There was virtual consensus among NTA activists on the type of collective struggle necessary to bring about this change. Given the constraints of capitalist society, NTA activists subscribed to the idea that struggle is a long, hard process of building communities of support and action among those most affected by globalisation. NTA activists viewed both the PS and AA as comparing unfavourably to the coalition in this respect. Community education and the mobilisation of grassroots organisations were tactics at the heart of the NTA campaign. NTA activists viewed AA, with its creative but mercurial direct action tactics, as deficient in its commitment to the 'long-haul' of collective mobilisation. Likewise, the PS did not appear to fit this requirement but for

different reasons --its leadership was viewed as remote, bureaucratic and incapable, or unwilling, to embrace the work of organising those most disadvantaged by the system. In the case of both AA and the PS, attributions made by NTA activists about the kind of people involved in these organisations set them apart from those associated with NTA. This, in turn, added to the sense of a collective 'we' within NTA.

To speak of collective identity is to speak of boundaries and conceptual frameworks applied to the multiorganisational field by members of a social movement, or, in this case, a social movement organisation (SMO), as a way of elaborating a common campaign strategy. This collective identity is never stable --changes in the protest environment, and how these changes affect individuals or groups in the organisation mean that re-negotiation of the collective identity is always a possibility (Melluci 1989). Because the coalition's life was finite, most of the NTA activists did not mount a call for any such re-negotiation; however, new information coming into the coalition from the oppositional field weakened certain aspects of the coalition's original basis of collaboration. Evidence of this is contained in the recognition by some NTA activists of intermediary overlapping positions and issue concerns between NTA and the PS.

However, other aspects of the collective identity stayed firm. Most NTA activists stayed with the coalition because it represented a collective expression of revolutionary resoluteness. Many NTA activists attributed social privilege to the organisers of the PS as well as gender privilege and individualism to AA organisers. These perceptions reinforced the identity of NTA as a group committed to the interests of the least privileged in Canadian society. Neither the media nor the government

presented a threat to NTA's collective identity --if anything their political distance from the work of the coalition strengthened it. The media may have strengthened the coalition's collective identity by consolidating its public image.

So far NTA has been figured as one of a number of actors in a multiorganisational field. How the coalition was able to come together as an independent actor in this field depended on the collaboration of its individual members, most representing organisations of their own. As with any coalition this collaboration, once established, had to be maintained. As the campaign progressed and the NTA activists learned about what else was happening within the APEC opposition movement, some activists expressed doubts about the absoluteness of what made the coalition different from the other players. However, there were other factors involved in weakening the cohesiveness of NTA's collective identity. That few of the NTA activists admitted to a consistent sense of personal identification with the organisation attests, in part, to the short-term nature of the coalition and, in part, to tensions generated within the coalition. I now turn to an investigation of these tensions.



## ***Chapter 5: Campaign Perspectives of the Centre Group.***

I interviewed 5 members of the centre group. All of these activists had a long-standing relationship with the PWC and had been involved with various aspects of the work carried out by the centre (see history). Three participants were members of the Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance. All were part of the NTA campaign from beginning to end. The importance of the centre group to the coalition cannot be overstated. The impetus for NTA came largely from the centre group. Its contribution of resources to NTA was the single most significant factor in the successful day-to-day running of the coalition's campaign. The PWC received and transmitted telephone messages concerning coalition business seven days a week. Committee meetings took place there on a regular basis. The newsletter was written and developed at the PWC. Centre group members worked at the PWC until the late hours of the night. The centre and non-centre groups both identified the centre group as the coalition's "core" member group. I will uncover the various components of this attribution and its significance in the findings (see p.105 for description of how the findings are laid out).

### **Goals of the centre group.**

The centre group had two main goals. The first was to introduce an international perspective to the campaign. This goal had two component parts, first to build international solidarity and second to include and use the term 'imperialism.' The

centre activists saw the anti-APEC campaign as an opportunity for North Americans to gain an understanding of the situation of people in the South. They wanted to make public an analysis that connects the exploitation of peoples of North and South. This strategy included educating people to move away from a 'paternalistic' charity model of pity for the South to one of changing the international economic system for the benefit of all workers. They wanted the conference and march to be a signal to people in the South that the North was prepared to act in solidarity with the South. One activist puzzled over what she saw as the reluctance of North American activists to support struggles in the South since, as she put it, "*a victory against imperialism in one country is a victory for all.*" Achieving this consciousness requires that people in the North have an understanding of the term imperialism to begin with and the centre group activists acknowledged that this was not the case. Several of them cited, as evidence, the initial struggle to have the term accepted within the coalition. Therefore, another part of the goal to promote an internationalist perspective was, as one activist put it, to "*reclaim the term imperialism.*" This goal could only be achieved by bringing the term back into the consciousness of activists.

The second goal of the centre group was connected to the first. This was to define the objectives of the international conference. Several of the centre group activists alluded to the historical significance of bringing together the anti-imperialist struggles of North and South at the conference. One activist talked about the importance of having a third-world perspective at the conference and another saw the opportunity to use the case of the Philippines as a model for understanding the impact of imperialism on third world peoples. Presenting the NDFP campaign at an international

conference was an important symbol of resistance to imperialism for the centre group.

While the centre group wanted a strong international content at the conference, they also wanted a local component. As for the content of the conference, among other items, two of the activists thought that there should be academic input at the conference --as one activist put it, "*to put into theory what we have practised at the grassroots.*"

#### Organising conditions of the centre group:

**a) Political traditions.** The centre group's goals were consistent with its political traditions. The centre-group's source of political inspiration had its foundation in third world anti-imperialist struggles. One activist commented on people's resistance to using the term 'imperialism' in Canada. She pointed out that, by contrast, the term would be instantly recognised and understood in a third world context. Speaking of the uncompromising stand that imperialism forces people in the third world to take, this activist expressed her organisation's commitment to the work of the coalition:

*There's no way that, I mean, that when people are suffering such hardship, and such brutal conditions, struggling for their own survival, there's no way that they can say OK maybe let's change it, or talk about it, or let's put a human face on it, let's try and make it more inclusive. I mean they know, I mean its so clear for them because its their experience and they know what APEC is a part of and they know what imperialism means because they experience it so harshly. So thinking about that and how that is the basis for our organisation's involvement in the coalition, that's really what drives or inspires our commitment to the coalition and to the organising.*

The exploitation and oppression of people in the third world witnessed first hand by many of the centre group activists in their own homeland (or the homeland of their

parents) of the Philippines provided an intense emotional commitment to the cause of national liberation in that country and to mass-based organisations throughout the third world. All of the activists had a consistent and strong analysis which both flowed from and reinforced this commitment. It included a critique of global capitalism which connected a history of colonisation to the debt crisis, International Monetary Fund 'Structural Adjustment Programs' and to the Philippines government's labour export policy which they viewed as 'forced migration.' As part of NTA they wanted to interconnect the politics of the Philippines, APEC, globalisation and conditions in Canada. A cornerstone of interconnection, which joined the work of the PWC and support for the national democratic agenda in the Philippines was to argue that Filipino workers (often highly educated and the majority of whom are women) are forced by their conditions to leave their country of origin to work as domestic labour in Canada. This arrangement works to the advantage of the government of the Philippines which relies on the inflow of foreign exchange sent to the Philippines by overseas workers. It also works to the advantage of the government of Canada because a supply of cheap domestic labour pre-empts middle-class Canadians from lobbying the Federal government for its long promised, but never delivered, national child day-care program.

The linking of local, global and international issues was a central objective of the centre group and explained its motivation for being in the coalition. Its members were heavily involved in the coalition's educational outreach and this linking formed the basis of their message. A centre group activist maintained that with their knowledge of conditions in the third world and their links to third world movements, the centre group could provide "*political education and guidance*" to the coalition.

According to the centre group, education was the pivotal component of the campaign. The anti-imperialist national liberation struggle in the Philippines recognised the importance of long-term education as a political tactic and this served as a model for the centre group of how to organise the NTA campaign. Using the concept of protracted struggle, the centre group's template for political organising followed a particular pathway: first, find out what is happening with the people, second, educate and organise them by bringing them into a campaign and, third, in a 'step by step' process expand that campaign.

The examples set by third-world national liberation struggles provided the inspiration and a framework for the centre group's strategic approaches. The activists were also oriented to issues of importance to the Filipino community in Canada and to issues affecting the whole of Canadian society. For example, two activists from the Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance spoke of issues of identity as Filipino-Canadians being instrumental in their entry into activism. Thus, the narratives of justice for the third world, forced migration, and ethnic status in Canadian society were linked by an internally unified analysis of imperialism and class politics. The concept of capitalism as a world system combined the analysis of working class struggles in Canada and in the Philippines --at the same time acknowledging differences in the organisation of opposition to capitalism in each location. That there was a strong socialist tradition in the centre group's politics is clear. All of the centre group activists stated that, as they saw it, while other struggles were important, class struggle<sup>37</sup> and material politics defined the primary emancipatory movement in opposing imperialist globalisation.

The centre group's political tradition was animated by a passionate commitment to forwarding the project of global social justice. This commitment meant addressing the roots of inequality between first and third-world nations and the roots of social inequality within all nations. This commitment was pronounced in its focus on the politics of the Philippines with a strong endorsement of the various national liberation movements, above ground and underground, in that country. NTA served as a vehicle to make the expression of this focus a reality in the context of organising to oppose the AELM in Vancouver. This event provided an opportunity for the group to carve out a place for its revolutionary and anti-imperialist politics in the social movement to oppose advanced capitalist globalisation. The centre group's analysis and goals epitomised the essence of NTA's collective identity.

**b) View of Canadian left.** The centre group identified certain features of the Canadian left as barriers to their political agenda or adverse to their political tradition. In other areas they were critical of the condition of the left. Centre group members reported that resistance to using the term 'imperialism' was a barrier encountered early in the campaign --inside and outside of the coalition. What was this resistance? To illustrate an answer to this question, the following are quotes from two activists outside of NTA whose organisations had chosen not to use the term. One activist from the PS who included the term in his own analysis of globalisation nevertheless thought that its use set up a reaction in people which was, *"God here comes the rhetoric, here it comes."* An activist with AA who was also in favour of the term remarked that *"you have to bring it up in the right context. I can see that word resonating in Asia...because people understand imperialism; here, it is a learning process to even think of Canada*

*as being an imperialist country.*" NTA activists encountered a number of organisations that had a preference for using the term "corporate globalisation." Within the coalition there had been an intense debate about its use and this had extended to the naming of the conference which some members had expressed a preference for calling a "festival of resistance." However, promoting use of the term imperialism as part of the opposition movement to APEC was critical for the centre group since for them it was the key concept linking struggles against capital in North and South. Highlighting the term was also a tactical decision because at a time when public consciousness about APEC was high, using anything other than the term imperialism would, in their estimation, water down the militancy of the coalition's message.

A centre group activist expressed frustration with the Canadian left for not taking the initiative in starting an anti-imperialist group to oppose APEC --as a result, he said, *"We got the ball rolling."* The same activist went on to say that the centre group had encountered, both within and outside of the coalition, an expectation that the PWC might form the nucleus of an ongoing anti-capitalist movement in Vancouver. The activist was clear that this would not be the case since building socialism in Canada was the job of the Canadian left --not that of the PWC. That the left had, so far, failed to do this made international solidarity difficult to achieve and one centre-group activist expressed disappointment about the inability of Marxist-Leninist groups in Vancouver to connect with the international delegates at the PCAIG: *"They just showed up because they have things to display which is normal behaviour of the left here. And whenever they start gathering, they want to open up their table and their books. That is not the kind of organising that we need in order to achieve radical change."* Furthermore, one

of the activists observed that Marxist-Leninist groups paid lip-service to third-world struggles while another commented on the "*superior attitude*" of some left groups towards people from the third-world. The activist was surprised at this given what she considered to be a "*higher form of struggle*" in the third world compared to the quiescence of first world 'radical' opposition.

The low level of organised radical opposition to the ruling establishment in Canada was another theme that arose from the interviews of centre group activists. The left was characterised as weak, fragmented and sectarian. Two of the activists held up AA as an example of the left's inability to mount a systematic and organised campaign, a symptom of the left's inability to wage a struggle from beginning to end. "*Such action raises the consciousness of the people but does not sustain it,*" one said. Another mentioned that many left groups were more interested in scoring points over each other than in confronting the common enemy. Another theme was that the left was too preoccupied with divisive identity politics. Such politics did not, for example, in the case of the mainstream women's movement recognise that women were not equally oppressed --that as a result of class, some women oppress others, that likewise, some people of colour oppress others. This is not to suggest that a politics of identity was unimportant to the centre group whose members had long campaigned against racism. However, the North American version of identity politics had a missing element --it did not show how such a politics needed to be situated in the capitalist relations of production. Centre group activists explained identity politics and the competitiveness of Marxist-Leninist groups as characteristic of North American individualism. Lastly, two activists drew attention to the prevalence of 'anarchist tendencies' in the Vancouver left.



These tendencies sometimes showed up in the coalition --one activist gave as an example of these tendencies in action: the suggestion that the conference be called a "festival of resistance."

There was variation in the centre group's summary of the left; it was not uniformly negative. One activist concluded from her experience in NTA that there was potential for networking and successful coalition building on the left which included activists working together across lines of gender and race. Another concluded that under the right conditions the socially subordinated could gel as a force to defeat capital; however, this would require a skilful leadership that was, at present, not in existence.

NTA centre activists generally saw the condition of the left as providing far from ideal circumstances in which to organise opposition to APEC. This was the case to the extent that they felt compelled to initiate the anti-APEC opposition in Vancouver. The low-ebb of left opposition, its unsustainable strategies of resistance, divisive debates and reluctance to adopt the concept of imperialism were cited as hindrances to developing opposition to APEC. These deficiencies nonetheless provided an opportunity for the centre group to make its own unique mark on the political landscape of Vancouver. Consistent with its own traditions the centre group provided the wherewithal to conduct a concerted campaign giving representation to third-world struggles and linking these to social justice issues in Canada.

**c) View of NTA internal conditions.** As for all of the members, the coalition environment became the operational milieu for the centre group to actualise its anti-APEC objectives. This required that the centre group become part of a collective relationship. Into this relationship it brought its political traditions, its experience of the

Canadian left and its own campaign goals. Working out this relationship was an ongoing task. The centre group activists found themselves in partnership with other members from different traditions who, it was perceived, had varying degrees of commitment to the coalition.

Being at the logistical hub of the coalition, the centre group was in a strategic position to assess the various working dimensions of the coalition. In doing so, the centre group arrived at a series of conclusions about the impact of variable member experience and variable volunteer labour commitment on the maintenance and momentum of the organisation. The interviewees identified three main areas of concern: deficiencies in commitment; fragility of coalition unity and organisational problems.

**Uncertain commitment.** As mentioned above, the PWC was a very active place in which the lights burned late at night. Hard work was crucial to the success of the coalition. Centre group members found themselves in a position of having to supply a great deal of labour to the organisation. This was confirmed by one of the centre group activists, who, when asked about possible sources of tensions within the coalition, replied:

*I think the main one, speaking as a member...who works at the PWC, I think the main one was getting people to commit, to volunteer or to take the initiative, and to take on tasks, to speak at an event or do a workshop, to fax out or do smaller logistical things. That was definitely the main one, because at times there was the perception that because the NTA office was in the centre, that at times if people from other organisations weren't there, there was this perception that the work would go on anyways, almost magically, that stuff would just happen like articles would get written, forms would be completed you know, without fully appreciating that it is happening, because most people at the centre were doing the work. That was one of the sources of tension.*

The fact that the infrastructure of the coalition was situated at the PWC worked to the disadvantage of the centre group by creating the impression that not only was the main day-to-day business of the coalition happening at the PWC but that the group occupying the PWC was taking care of it without need of assistance. In their comments, the centre group activists spoke of variability in the work commitment of non-centre group activists. Some, they said, were involved on a regular basis right up to the mobilisation. Some started but left midway, some started midway, others were absent for a while but returned, others, as one activist put it, "*were willing to put in their ideas but were not willing to put more energy into it.*"

Various explanations were offered for the variable work commitment. One activist remarked that work commitment could never be assured because the coalition was organised on a volunteer basis and there was no structure to oblige people to attend or to contribute. She pointed out that many members of the centre group were, fortunately for the coalition, in a position to give time because they were on summer break as students, or were otherwise unemployed. With regard to the lack of work contributed at the centre, one activist suggested that the "*reluctance to come down,*" (to the centre) might have been due to a perception that the coalition was a "*Filipino thing.*" She based this explanation on information that had reached the centre group from the larger activist community --not from within the coalition. There was acknowledgement by one activist that the centre group was the most "*consolidated*" group in the coalition and that having a strong base of support might be a factor in encouraging individuals to take on initiatives and commitment to work. However,

another activist observed that there were individuals who contributed a considerable amount work but who belonged to no group.

One activist saw the variable commitment as evidence of "*uneven development*" in the coalition. This condition is where, "*some people develop more rapidly than others, some are willing to do certain things, some people say I'm not going to attend meetings but I'll be there during the rally. But some people say, no if you want to become more relevant and if you want to lead, then you have to attend the meetings and understand the dynamics of the movement.*" This explanation is consistent with a number of the centre group activists who strongly asserted that they were willing to carry the burden of the work that they did because it contributed to the "*larger movement.*"

**Fragility of coalition unity.** Following on from the uneven development argument was the issue of coalition unity. Two of the activists stated that coalitions usually follow a path that alternates between internal struggle and internal unity. NTA was no different in this respect, one activist recalled both controversial debates and moments of solidarity within the coalition --the March official launch being one of the latter. She compared her own group, the FCYA, as enjoying a high level of unity by comparison to NTA, which, because of the broadness of groups represented there, was much less unified. The roots of this essential lack of cohesiveness were explained in terms of uneven development, ideological differences and different political priorities. Although these categories were not clearly demarcated, they nonetheless signified dimensions of an underlying fragility perceived by the centre group activists.

Uneven development --sometimes called "*different levels of understanding*" by the centre activists was a key concept used by four out of the five centre group activists when identifying reasons for instability in the coalition. As used by the centre activists, the term means the differential growth of skill and awareness which arises in the course of activism. It can be summarised in the following way: some activists in the movement develop an understanding of the work in which they are involved more quickly and deeply than others; these activists develop a critical analysis of the system which affects their everyday lives. As a consequence, some are able to grasp the situation that they are working in more thoroughly than others --responding appropriately to the demands of the occasion. The result is that some members of the coalition were able to understand the politics of the anti-APEC organising by responding to the urgency of the work. Some were not able to do this to the same extent, thereby creating a discrepancy in the work output or planning input that could be mustered from the individual coalition members during the campaign. Admitting that this view might not find popular acceptance within the coalition and among its supporters, one activist nonetheless stated that "*individual development is always there.. its a reality.*" Another was careful to avoid blaming individuals --particularly young people-- for not having developed a higher degree of political awareness. She lay the responsibility for this lack of development on inadequate guidance provided by the Canadian left.

The effects of uneven development were many. One activist complained that co-ordination of tasks within the coalition was difficult given the unreliability of work commitments due to uneven development. Different styles or approaches to resistance

were explained as resulting from uneven development. For example, the suggestion made by non-centre activists that the conference be called a "festival of resistance" demonstrated an analysis which was unable to determine the difference between culture and politics. "*Do we want only people who will come to a festival to come to a conference?*" asked one of the centre activists. The importance to the anti-imperialist movement of making alliances with academics was argued by the centre activists who proposed having an academic speaker at the conference. A centre group activist observed that some coalition members objected to this proposal as condoning elitism. This objection demonstrated the existence of "*different levels of understanding*" in the coalition. Thus, in many cases where there was disagreement over tactics within the coalition and uneven development was seen as a contributing factor.

This is not to suggest that the centre activists did not expect differences to occur within the coalition. They acknowledged the variety of ideological positions, organisational styles and political interests represented within the coalition. These differences were regarded as inevitable --and their incorporation into the coalition even seen as an achievement-- but at the same time they constituted a potential threat to the unity of the coalition. Given acceptance of their inevitability, ideological splits were seen as posing a different kind of problem to the instability caused by uneven development. Whereas uneven development tended to weaken the fabric of the coalition, ideological differences might cause a rupture in the fabric itself.

Given perceptions of actual and potential threats to the stability and direction of the coalition, how did the centre activists evaluate the unity of the coalition? Here there is contradictory evidence. One activist attributed the inconsistent work output of

member groups and individuals to a lack of personal identification with NTA. One remarked that some did identify with the organisation but underrated its historical significance. On the other hand, a couple of centre activists thought that some individuals, particularly those who were not part of an organisation, tended to over-identify with the organisation by having unrealistic expectations of its potential to provide an ongoing focus for the radical left in Vancouver.

**Organisational problems.** Lastly, the centre group members commented on a number of organisational problems affecting the coalition. According to one centre group activist the coalition adopted a committee system in order to, "*decentralise the work, because we know that we can't always have meetings of everybody. So if you want everybody to be involved from beginning to end then you hook yourself up with a committee and attend meetings.*" One activist reported that, initially, when 30 people turned up to a monthly meeting, decision-making became difficult. The committee system, with a central coordinating committee was designed to facilitate decision-making as well as to provide a means of channelling volunteers into the work. It did not always work that well according to some of the centre activists; for example, it was never clear whether or not MOB should distribute the newsletter. Another noted constant changes in MOB representation, or absence of MOB representation on CoCo, as causing a problem with communication between the two committees. This system also inadvertently set up a division of labour on the basis of assumed group expertise. A centre activist said that a decision was made within the centre group that non-Filipinos were in a better position to do the mobilisation because of their experience and

connections organising in the local community. The activist added that not all of the centre group activists were in favour of this decision.

### Summary of the centre group's organising context.

The centre group was the most consolidated member group of the NTA coalition with a collective identity of its own. This was the case by dint of the resources available to it and because of the personal network formed by the overlapping organisations which made up its collective membership. Its consolidation was enhanced by having a powerfully motivated and unified analysis of international and local conditions. The centre group used its position and analysis towards the realisation of unequivocal objectives in the NTA campaign. The political tradition of the centre came out of a particular framework of social justice. This tradition views international capital as imperialistic in its exploitation of third world labour and material resources, as well as constraining in its limitation of national self-determination in the third world. With its connection to groups fighting for national liberation in the Philippines and in continuation of the 1996 anti-imperialist conference in the Philippines, it initiated through a local women's group the NTA coalition to oppose the AELM in Vancouver. Coming out of its political tradition, its goals were to introduce an anti-imperialist politics into the opposition movement against APEC. A key component of this goal was supporting community education. Educational networking became a hallmark of the NTA campaign.

This campaign came into being in what the centre activists regarded as less than favourable conditions. From their point of view the Vancouver left would not, on its own, create an anti-imperialist campaign. For this reason they took the lead in mounting



unequivocal opposition to APEC in Vancouver. Consistent with their valuing of international solidarity they had hoped that local left Marxist-Leninist groups would establish connections with progressive forces in the Philippines. However, the divisions on the socialist left and perceived disinterest or a superior attitude to third world struggles manifested by potential allies, were not conducive to such linking. Despite these problems the coalition was able to attract a wide range of local and national groups to become members.

The coalition also presented a challenge to the centre group. In particular the diversity of the membership appeared to be a source of frustration. A wide range of political experience and work commitment in the coalition contributed to an unpredictable supply of labour needed to undertake the coalition's tasks. Furthermore, inconsistent attendance and political traditions seen as incompatible with the main thrust of the campaign contributed to shifts of direction or tactics which were not favoured by the group. Ideological differences were seen as another source of potential instability, and the committee structure of the coalition, while a stabilising mechanism, did not work as it was designed to. Given the encountered conditions, internal and external to the coalition, and given their strong motivation to proceed with an internationalist agenda in a local setting, what were the actions of the centre group?

### **Actions of the centre group**

The centre group responded to the conditions encountered within the coalition by taking actions which would maintain, first, continuity, second, focus and/or leadership,

and third, integrity of the coalition's structure. A major problem identified by the centre group was maintaining a consistent approach to decision-making. An activist expressed the problem this way, *"it fluctuates in terms of attendance at meetings, so I remember this coming up a couple of times, well you missed the meeting and so this was the only time to make a decision, otherwise, if we keep putting it off, we are not going to see each other until a couple of weeks from now, and then how can we ever make a decision?"* A frustration voiced by several of the activists was that they felt forced to re-visit decisions that had been made previously because when an action which was based on a previous decision was made public, people who had not been party to the decision, would raise objections to the action. A centre activist illustrated this point by giving an example. Objections were raised by non-centre activists to conference arrangements introduced for discussion at the last coalition meeting in October.<sup>38</sup> The centre activist was surprised at these objections because, she claimed, the structure and program of the conference had been discussed and agreed to months prior to this meeting.

In the light of irregular attendance at coalition and committee meetings, the centre group (who regularly attended meetings throughout the life of the coalition) adopted a strategy of making a decision based on the premise that it was consistent with the basis of unity. One activist explained the strategy this way, *"If people can't come to the organisation, sometimes we make a decision. Its sort of understood by people involved who are working within a framework, a basis of unity, and obviously we make decisions that go outside of that committee, even if people don't agree with that decision it can be brought up again."* Thus, at times, decisions were made by the centre group

'by default.' This is perhaps not surprising. Due to the fact that they conducted the daily business of the NTA coalition at the PWC office, the centre-group activists had to make 'decisions on the spot.' A full consultation on every decision was not practical.

The impracticality of full participatory decision-making in the face of inconsistent attendance and commitment was one of the reasons given for not having what one activist called "*ultra-democracy*" in the coalition. According to this view, strict adherence to ultra-democratic principles was impractical. Another activist declared that conducting strict consensus politics in an organisation where there was a lack of ideological and political unity would cause more difficulties than it would resolve.

As a result, the centre group concluded that the conditions within the coalition were not conducive to a process-based, open-ended decision-making model,

*As activists, we want the results and if we can't make a decision, so what's the point? We can't achieve anything. We can't be ultra-democratic in our discussions, otherwise we can't achieve anything. We are in a system, the capitalist system is very sophisticated, forward looking. Fifty years from now they know exactly what they want and as an activist, we should have a better way of thinking and we should be more organised. If we want to confront the system, then we'd better think of ways that we are going to do this. It's not just "anything is OK."*

A strategy of firm, concerted and practical planning was subscribed to by the centre group. They maintained that people who had not attended meetings where decisions had been made did not have the right to re-open the debate which led to the decision. Also, if decisions were made without the input of the entire coalition, or the entire committee, depending on the situation, they would be made in the spirit and principles

laid down in the basis of unity. Moreover, members of the centre group activists steadfastly claimed that they never made a major decision without bringing it to the attention of the monthly coalition meeting.

Ultimately the question of decision-making became a major issue within the coalition. I will address this later but, for now, based on the foregoing evidence, I conclude that goal-directed decisiveness was at least as important to the centre group as the need for a meticulous observation of democratic procedures. When conditions dictated that such a process was not possible, the centre group members were willing to make pragmatic decisions. They earnestly maintained the legitimacy of this pragmatism by arguing that decisions were made with reference to the coalition's founding document. In other words, decision-making was consistent with the objectives of the coalition and consistent with the rule that "the majority cannot impose on the minority and the minority cannot stop the work of the majority" (See objectives of coalition under Basic Principles and quoted rule under Decision-Making Process in the document entitled 'The NTA Coalition and PCAIG' Appendix 5).

The centre group's decisiveness was situated in a broader concept of leadership. One activist emphasised that this leadership was *political* leadership. That there would be political leadership in the coalition was regarded as inevitable, as well as desirable, "*Within the coalition itself, you need a core of individual leaders, or a core of organisation members in the coalition that would help set the pace of the work of the coalition once the basis of unity has been established and again....but I know that some people might resent some people taking leadership.*" As in the case of 'uneven development,' two of the centre group activists anticipated that there might be resistance

to a concept or practice used by the centre group, in this case, the concept of leadership. However, from the centre group's perspective there was much to lose by not accepting the need for their political leadership: *"I think it (the centre group) played a very big role in trying to give direction and focus. There are a lot of tendencies in the coalition and if we don't, if the Filipino group didn't have a strong focus in positioning ourselves as NTA, then probably it would disperse ..... But I think when people are, some of the organisations are getting out of focus, I think we played a very important role in refocusing the whole coalition."* The activist speaking here regarded the need for leadership as imperative, both for preserving the integrity of the organisation as well as in keeping it on track.

Why did the centre group believe that it was the right member to lead the coalition? First, the centre group was the group most consistently present in the coalition --it had been in the coalition from beginning to end. Second, it had a long history of organising. Third, its ideas had certain advantages to those of other groups or individuals. One activist stated that internal struggle was normal in coalitions. This person said that out of a competition of ideas presented, one group emerges ahead of the others and tends to dominate the coalition with its analysis. In the case of NTA, this was the centre group which, having a historical perspective, having connections to third world movements, and having an understanding of APEC, was *"well versed"* in the political ideas necessary to lead the coalition's work. Leadership and the decisiveness that comes with taking on a leadership role provided the key to keeping the coalition together and focused. However, as leaders making decisions in the interest of the

coalition, the point was made repeatedly that the centre group's actions stayed within the spirit and intentions of the basis of unity.

Another claim to leadership offered by the centre group was that it did not comprise the only concentration of leadership in the coalition. One activist observed that leadership within the coalition was to some extent governed by task and political priorities. For example, some of the most consistently present activists in the MOB committee, who were from the New Socialists, formed a node of leadership within the coalition. Their priority was to mobilise local groups and individuals for the march and rally. The conference was the bailiwick of the centre group activists on CoCo. One activist remarked that without the consistent presence of the centre group activists, the conference would not have been operationalised.

As well as being the organ for ensuring the success of the conference, CoCo played a role in compensating for some of the perceived insufficiencies in the organisational structure of the coalition. According to some members of the centre group, the committee system did not work as well as it was designed to. For example, decisions made in the committees were not always communicated to CoCo. One centre group activist noted that CoCo was "*forced to lead*" the coalition. This happened as a response to the looseness of the coalition and because of communication difficulties between the committees. However, the activist added that CoCo did compromise when necessary, as, for example, when it backed down on trying to change a MOB committee decision to have the march at three o'clock. CoCo would have preferred twelve o'clock.

Keeping the coalition on track was an imperative for the centre group.

Exercising leadership politically --and through CoCo practically-- were ways in which this could be achieved. However, as I have described before, the functional strength of the coalition was also a matter of concern. The centre group took actions to remedy what they saw as inherent instability within the coalition. One action was to work very hard. Hard work compensated for the perceived variability of work commitment in the coalition and served to establish its claim to leadership: *"So usually you will have certain individuals, whether they are connected to groups or not, who are really willing to put in their two cents worth of work; but the people who end up leading who take up most of the burden are those who have been involved in the coalition and they have a very strong organisation, because that is where they draw their strength."*

Acknowledging that the consolidation of a particular leading group may cause resentment among other members not in a position to lead, the activist added, *"there is really nothing more that we can do about it, the work must go on."*

However, leadership and compensatory work did not address less tangible problems perceived by members of the centre group to exist in the coalition. They took a specific action to offset what they viewed as instability created by the presence of different ideological positions in the coalition. The proposal to stop the coalition's internal education was made at a coalition meeting on July 24<sup>th</sup> by a member of the centre group. Originally the internal education meetings had been set up to increase the coalition members' understanding of key concepts such as imperialism. The reason given for proposing their demise was pragmatic: that ideological cracks had started to

appear at the internal education meetings and to continue to hold them meant risking division in the coalition.

At the meeting there was agreement that the proposal be accepted. However, this agreement was given reluctantly by some coalition members and the centre group's initiative to stop the education became an issue within the coalition. At the pre-conference assessment meeting a non-centre member expressed her view that the decision to stop the education program may have had negative repercussions. In reply, the centre group members were adamant that the coalition should not be responsible for providing this education, that it was the responsibility of member groups to educate their own members, and that education could be obtained through NTA public forums. One of the centre activists whom I interviewed expressed the view that a short-run coalition was not the venue for political debates and that the coalition was successful in *avoiding* difficult political debates among groups. Three of the centre group activists mentioned that if the centre group had differences of opinion --political or otherwise-- with other coalition members, these disagreements would be dealt with on a bilateral basis. In other words, the whole coalition should not become involved. Thus, given the circumstances of the coalition, the centre group's preference was to prevent potentially damaging disagreements among member groups by limiting the opportunity for (or scope of) such disagreements.



## Summary of the centre group's actions.

The actions of the centre group in initiating the NTA coalition must be seen in the context of the circumstances that existed outside and inside of the coalition. Members of the centre group whom I interviewed expressed misgivings about the fractiousness and ineffectuality of the Canadian left (and therefore of the Vancouver left). However, what was outside became part of the interior of the coalition. The centre group found itself having to deal with a multiplicity of left groups and individuals who represented, in its view, a wide variation of ideological positions and political interests. The centre group had a lot at stake; its mission was not just local but international. Its goal was to provide a demonstration of support for third world struggles and, in particular, a continuation of the anti-imperialist campaign from the 1996 PCAIG. The centre group was, therefore, highly motivated to ensure that the coalition proceeded smoothly and stayed united.

In achieving these objectives, the centre group identified problems that the coalition would have to overcome. These obstacles to a successful campaign were as follows: the unpredictability of consistent support for the coalition, inexperienced activists joining the coalition, procedural difficulties in the decision-making capacity of the coalition, and instability both in terms of ideological fissures and structural inadequacies. To remedy these problems the centre group, bolstered by a confidence based in its long history of organising and in the comprehensiveness of its political ideas, took on a political leadership role in the coalition. This meant contributing a great deal of work and other resources to the coalition. Leadership also required making

strategic decisions such as using the structure to its advantage and suggesting measures to inhibit potential conflict between members.

## ***Chapter 6: Campaign Perspectives of the Non-Centre Group***

I interviewed 10 members of the non-centre group. Of these, only two were not closely associated with member groups. All were regular contributors to the work of the coalition, four on a continuous basis during the time of the study from June to November 1997. The member groups represented by these individuals included socialist groups, an environmental group, local left community support groups, and third world solidarity groups. All but two of the groups focused their activism in East Vancouver. The groups represented by these individuals, while enjoying amicable relations, cannot be described as constituting a collective unit in the way that the centre group, with its overlapping group memberships, can. While there was greater variation in the views expressed by this group than in those expressed by the centre group, there were many points of agreement on perspective and action. Unlike the centre group, the non-centre group did not have access to office facilities common to all of their organisations. They did have access to the PWC, but none of them were permanently situated there.

### **Goals of the non-centre group**

The campaign aims of the non-centre group were not as coherent as those of the centre group. This finding is a reflection of the greater political and organisational heterogeneity represented by these groups, as well as a reflection of the looser ties between those interviewed compared to the stronger ties between the centre group interviewees. In fact, there was only one item, offered by half of those interviewed,

which suggested a common goal. This goal was the opportunity that NTA presented to organise local groups around a central problem. Arguably, the problem was globalisation rather than APEC specifically; however, the AELM was regarded as a symbolic event that could galvanise local opposition to free trade which as one activist put it, "*is a central issue for the Canadian government and is therefore a central issue for the left.*" There were two aspects attached to the opportunity for protest offered by NTA. The first was linking local issues such as poverty in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside to overarching economic processes such as globalisation and imperialism; the second was what one activist described as a "*rare opportunity*" to bring together disparate groups into a local network in order to build and strengthen a broader movement of revolutionary opposition to globalisation.

#### Organising conditions of the non-centre group.

**a) Political tradition.** Although the non-centre activists were a politically diverse group, some generalisation is possible. There was a preponderance of activists who had specific interests in third world politics. Some had been involved in third world solidarity work in Canada, and/or had themselves lived, worked or been activists for short periods in third world contexts. There were four activists who belonged to this latter group, two of whom had worked in the Philippines.

Members of the non-centre group had been involved in different ways with local and third-world politics. One activist who subscribed to an anti-imperialist politics, had directed her activism towards building radical movements locally to support politically and materially, where necessary, third world liberation struggles. For a number of the

activists the GRWDG, and later NTA, had been an opportunity to learn more about globalisation and anti-imperialism. Two had come to the coalition through involvement with the women's movement. For one, NTA was an opportunity to find out more about women's organising in the third world as well as about the activism of marginalised women in Canada --a theme explored within the GRWDG. For the other, NTA offered an opportunity to link identity politics with anti-imperialism and opposition to APEC. She contrasted this to her experience of mainstream women's groups which had a version of identity politics which consisted of "*putting my oppression against yours.*" One spoke of her experience working with women and youth in third world solidarity campaigns as being consistent with working in NTA.

While there were strong anti-establishment sentiments expressed by the non-centre activists, only those who were members of socialist groups were explicit about labelling their politics 'socialist.' Among these activists none described themselves as Marxist-Leninist, one described 'trotskyism' (the activist requested that I spell this term with a small 'T') as part of his political tradition. Other activists were less favourably inclined towards Marxism. One activist condemned Marxism as 'classist' since it was confined to the purview of university academics. This activist subscribed to a politics of identity or difference as the key to re-distribution. Another took exception to the use of Marxist rhetoric within the coalition. Others described themselves as anti-capitalist rather than socialist. There were two self-described anarchists one of whom stated that anarchism was itself part of the socialist tradition. What united the activists was a militant and/or revolutionary politic. In contrast to the centre group activists, all except two identified the importance of inter-linking cultural (identity) politics and material

(class) politics in building opposition to globalisation. Only one stated that material politics should be the leading force in challenging imperialist globalisation.

The non-centre grouping came into the coalition from a variety of political perspectives; however, all, in one way or another, had a well defined interest in developing an international movement to oppose imperialism. This interest included encouraging different forms of international solidarity, NTA itself being one of those forms. All were opposed to capitalist expansion and the effects of this expansion in the North as well as the South. While many of the non-centre group activists had either worked in the third world or supported struggles there, few appeared to have the degree of immediate organisational or personal connection to third world conditions or struggles that the centre group did. Many of the non-centre group expressed how excited they had been at having the opportunity to get involved with the coalition and many spoke highly of the work of the PWC.<sup>39</sup> Many hoped that their involvement would contribute to a greater understanding of third world struggles of liberation and to the development of an internationalist perspective. The non-centre group activists represented a wide cross-section of Vancouver's radical left. While there was some variation in ideological viewpoint, there appeared to be large areas of agreement on the need for a movement to fight multiple forms of oppression.

**b) View of the Canadian left.** Commentary on the state of the left is not a prominent feature in the transcribed interviews of the non-centre group; only four of the interviewees used a critique of the left as a reference point for understanding the work of the coalition. Whereas the centre group tended to use such a commentary to explain why certain kinds of problem might have occurred within the coalition (eg. uneven

development), the non-centre group did not. However, in positioning the work of the coalition in the multiorganisational field of left movements, the analyses of both groups contain similarities.

The non-centre activists characterised the left opposition as weak but, unlike the centre activists, they focused on its shallowness rather than on its fragmentation. For example, one observed that the various anti-APEC demonstrations revealed a "*broad anti-corporate sentiment*," where "*people will come out in a flash but nothing sustained is being built*." Others reflected on a North American cultural milieu of, as one put it, "*constant change and quick fixes*" that worked against fundamental change resulting in an individualistic approach to radical action. This action contained a low level of political consciousness which often resulted in "*soft lifestyle anarchism*," rather than concerted collective action. Overall, the non-centre group saw the left as offering only limited opportunities to build a revolutionary force for social transformation. These remarks were similar to those of the centre group.

The non-centre group assessments of the left reflected on the overall success or otherwise of NTA. They focused on whether NTA had, or had not, contributed positively to the left. There was, for example, commentary from some activists on the inability of the coalition to carry out its goal of connecting with the "grassroots," particularly in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. One activist noted that human rights issues had resonated with the public during the APEC period, and that NTA had missed an opportunity by not including human rights in its campaign. The NTA experience had taught her that human rights should be part of any future movement

building. In the light of her experiences at NTA, another activist thought that any movement needed to say what it was 'for,' as much as to what it was against.

The non-centre group's assessment of the left was made with reference to answering two things, first, what did the NTA campaign reveal as a barometer of the condition of the left? and second, what was NTA's contribution to strengthening the left? By contrast, the centre group's assessment was more concerned with evaluating the receptivity of the left to the NTA initiative, to its anti-imperialist politics and to how successful the coalition could hope to be --given the multiple currents of the left. Both sets of analyses shared common themes and both combined elements of both diagnosis and prognosis. However, while the non-centre group was concerned about NTA's contribution to the viability of the left, the centre group was more concerned about the viability of the coalition in the general conditions of the left.

**c) view of the coalition's internal conditions:** The three component parts of the centre group's contextual condition, its political tradition, its view of the Canadian left and its view of the coalition's internal conditions can be construed as having equal salience in explaining its actions within the coalition. The non-centre group's view of the coalition's internal conditions, on the other hand, has by far the greatest salience in explaining its actions. That the non-centre group had a great deal of commentary about the internal conditions of the coalition will come as no surprise to anyone who was a part of the coalition. The tensions in the coalition were palpable but muted throughout the campaign and, as mentioned, they became overt only after the campaign was over. An equal amount, if not more, commentary was forthcoming from the non-centre group concerning the conference. While comments regarding the coalition's internal



conditions focused largely on democracy and democratic process, comments regarding the conference focused on the second major area of dispute: different ideological and tactical readings of how to achieve international solidarity. In this section I will explore the tensions arising from competing models of successful coalition building and maintenance while the tensions arising from local-international issues will become part of the debate in chapter eight on NTA's 'final act.'

The findings fall into a number of categories interrelated by their criticism of the actions of the core NTA group which I have been referring to as the 'centre group.' The categories are as follows: (1) perceptions of the centre group as the core group within the coalition (2) perceived strategies of control (3) antagonisms regarding work and degree of experience (4) issue of perceived differences in the coalition. The fifth and sixth categories share in common attempts by the non-centre group to find explanations for the existence of undisclosed (informal) authority within the coalition: (5) concerns factors attributed to the political traditions and motives of the centre group and (6) concerns the absence of constraints on the emergence of this perceived undisclosed structure of authority. While there is a strong convergence of opinion in all of these categories, there is no absolute uniformity of opinion. There is disagreement and variation among the judgements made.

Many of the views held by the non-centre group correspond to those of the centre group. This is particularly the case with regard to what I have called perceptions of the centre group being the "core" group of the coalition. One activist stated that the initiative and drive for the coalition came from the PWC groups. Another saw the leadership of the centre group "*sustaining it on-going and finishing it.*" Another noted

that the centre group was, "*involved in everything: the coalition, direction and conference.*" One remarked on the Philippines people's struggle as being the driving force behind NTA. Another activist talked about the members associated with the PWC as being the most consolidated grouping in the coalition, one whose members' focus is to "*come up with clear positions as organisations.*" The activist added that this was not the case for "*some of the other representatives*" (in the coalition). Only one other consolidated member grouping was mentioned by another activist --that of the New Socialist Group. However, the non-centre activists did not ascribe influence within the coalition to this group equal to that of the centre group.

All of those interviewed in the non-centre group asserted that the centre group exercised the power of its consolidated position within the coalition strategically, and at times undemocratically. However, there were variations in the emphasis given to this assertion. The centre group's core role providing initiative, direction and continuity to the coalition was regarded with ambivalence. Some of the activists saw this role as vital in keeping the coalition up and running. Others did not offer credit for the importance of the role. Most felt that the limits of the role were overstepped or that the role was deployed in questionable ways. Many non-centre activists declared that the disproportionate power of the core group constituted an undisclosed or informal hierarchy and that within the core group there were dominant voices, so to speak, at the top of the hierarchy.

Several of the non-centre activists observed that informal hierarchies arise in most organisations intentionally designed to be horizontal in their decision-making. One commented that, "*....there are those who are considered the decision makers*

*because they do a lot of work or because they've been around the longest...that's always the case, but in NTA that was especially the case.*" Another, also noting the frequency with which informal hierarchies arise in social movements, pointed out the dilemma of those occupying positions of power in an informal hierarchy. On the one hand, they have the advantage of not being held to account for the actions taken hierarchically since the existence of a hierarchy is not formally recognised. On the other hand, in taking on responsibility for ensuring the survival of the organisation, they are nonetheless unable to delegate work to others because of the formally horizontal structure. This dilemma has negative results:

*When there is a core group of people who aren't accountable because the hierarchy isn't recognised there's a lot of problems that happen; you have the inability to hold people accountable, then you have the people in the core group working their asses off because they can't delegate, they can't let things go, they can't let other people take the initiative, because they don't think it's going to get done. They are not willing to go through a learning process with things not getting done. Everything is just a little too important; it would be running the campaign... running the campaign became almost a managerial thing in terms of the divisions in the coalition.*

The end result of this dilemma is the creation of a managerial position without the power of delegation --a contradiction in terms. Another activist commented that the centre-group was 'administrative' in its core group role to the extent that political discussion and movement building were sidelined.

There were, however, different interpretations between two non-centre activists of how the centre group's administration amounted to 'control.' One saw the actions of the centre group as evidence of its need to control the coalition. Another saw control as an effect rather than a motive --the effect of making strategic decisions in

pursuit of its priorities and objectives. This activist dismissed the idea that the centre group's control was intentional.

Non-centre activists identified a number of strategies that they perceived the centre group to be using in exercising its influence within the coalition. Many stated that they had experienced decisions made by the whole coalition being changed later by the centre group. For example, one mentioned that after the debate about the conference name at a monthly coalition meeting no resolution was reached. Therefore, a non-centre activist proposed holding a separate meeting inviting anyone to attend who had an interest in deciding the coalition's official name for the conference. This meeting happened a short time later and a name was decided. However, this name was changed by the time of the next monthly meeting with a reason given by the centre group for why the decided name was not suitable. The problem of unilateral decision-making was repeatedly mentioned by most of the non-centre activists. One dissented somewhat from this view saying that major decisions made by the centre group were followed up with discussions at the monthly meetings.

However, some of the non-centre activists commented that proposals brought to the meetings seemed to be *fait accompli*. Examples given related to two open disputes at monthly meetings (which I witnessed first hand) between the centre group and the non-centre group. Both of these confrontations concerned details of the conference. One dispute took place in June and concerned the cost of the conference and one in October regarding conference status (delegate or observer) and rights accorded to status (voting, non-voting etc.). In the first case the members of the non-centre group argued against a \$100 dollar fee for local conference registrants arguing that this fee would

deter many local activists from attending. In the second instance objections were made by non-centre members about the exclusion of 'observers,' most of whom it was acknowledged would be local, from taking part in the conference workshops. A compromise of sorts was reached at the second discussion.

These tensions came to a head for a number of reasons. There was a feeling commonly expressed by the non-centre activists that the conference agenda was, from the beginning, directed by the centre group without much input from the non-centre group. This impression was based on a number of factors: first, that the centre group members sitting on CoCo (which was designated the task of setting up the conference) were influential in determining the agenda; second, that input that was sought at the monthly meetings was obtained in the manner of a consultation rather than in the manner of a broad ranging discussion and, third, that by the time the consultation occurred, the wheels of decision-making had already been long set in motion.<sup>40</sup> There was an overall sense that the coalition's formally democratic structure had been undermined by undisclosed decision-making. The fact that a compromise was reached in the second discussion weakens these claims somewhat; however, the compromise reached concerned logistical details while the political issues underlying the debate -- such as equal local and international representation-- were not resolved.

These confrontations revealed two things: first, that there were differences in preferred organising practices between the centre and non-centre groups and, second, that a great deal of tension circulated in the coalition about how priorities were set and decisions were made. Therefore, while there was evidence that major decisions were brought to the coalition meetings by the centre group, this did not allay the fears of non-

centre activists. They continued to doubt that the exercise was being conducted in a spirit of democratic participation. The role of CoCo was singled out for comment as undermining this spirit.

CoCo was named by most of the non-centre activists as not sticking to its role which was to reflect the decisions of the whole coalition. As one activist at the final assessment put it, *"The CoCo structure was useful, but what seems to have happened was that CoCo, instead of doing as it was designed to do, receive and communicate decisions generalised at the committee level, CoCo reps would translate decisions to the different committees. Decision-making was top down."* This was a commonly held view among the non-centre activists. Furthermore, there was testimony that within CoCo struggles occurred between the centre and non-centre activists with the arguments forwarded by the centre activists prevailing over those of the non-centre activists. An example cited was a debate over who would speak at the conference, the centre CoCo members arguing for an academic speaker, the non-centre CoCo members arguing for a local activist. An academic was chosen. While there was considerable criticism of the role of CoCo among the non-centre activists, one dissenting voice accepted the need for some kind of 'central committee.' However, this activist expressed regret that there couldn't have been more openness about CoCo's role in the coalition. As noted in the preceding chapter, one of the centre activists confirmed the leading role of CoCo.

The coalition structure itself was not identified as a problem by the non-centre activists. For example, it was not described as ill-designed to maximise opportunities for democratic participation. One activist remarked that a democratic structure of committee reporting and monthly coalition meetings was adequate, but that it didn't

work properly in practice. A number of comments concerned the lack of 'process' in decision-making<sup>41</sup> within the coalition. According to this view, little attention was paid to decision-making procedures which emphasise advanced facilitation skills, constructive criticism, scrupulous deliberation, equal and inclusive participation. These practices correspond to what a centre group member called 'ultra-democracy.'

Although decisions at the coalition meeting were made by consensus, those who found the process unsatisfactory expressed concern about *how* consensus was reached. Most of the non-centre activists had at some time in their political careers been exposed to consensus decision-making. However, one member of the non-centre group disagreed about the desirability of consensus decision-making --referring to strict consensus decision-making as "*process hell.*"

For this individual, as for many of the others, the main problem with decision-making resided in a sense that the coalition's agenda had been decided and was being propelled from behind the scenes by the centre group. This left no opportunity for re-evaluation or discussion of decisions or of coalition direction. An extension of this view was a sense, recorded by one activist, that anyone joining the coalition would be expected to jump on board a vehicle that was running in one direction and over which they realistically had no control. The choice was stay on and do the work or get off. There was some variation in this critical sentiment. One activist expressed a view commensurate with that of the centre group. She said that common sense dictated that a set direction was inevitable because those who were most regularly in attendance at the coalition's meetings would define its direction.

The non-centre activists located the centre-group's coalition agenda setting and decision-making as mainly occurring 'behind the scenes.' However, overt tactics were also reportedly used to these ends. There were, according to the centre activists, more subtle methods used to 'steer' debate in a particular direction. These methods included the use of a 'tag-team' approach to debate where, if an objection to the coalition's direction was raised, members of the centre group would tend to back each other up in countering the criticism. Also, two activists witnessed what one described as 'moralism' used to close debate. This concerned the framing of problems which arose within the coalition as petty or unimportant compared to the problems faced by people and progressive groups organising in third world conditions.

The centre-group's frustration regarding a variable work commitment must in some way have been overt because it was picked up by members of the non-centre group. There was some sympathy for this frustration. One activist expressed dismay that there were so many members signed up to the coalition but only a minority were active. Another observed that members of the centre group felt unappreciated for the amount of work that they contributed. Several members of the centre group were aware of the non-centre group's negative assessment of the coalition members' variable work output. They were also aware of the centre group's position that commitment equals organisational input. One interpreted this to mean, "*only if you are doing the work do you have the right to say this or that.*" In this activist's view, "*a truly democratic organisation doesn't have that hesitancy, like people feel they can comment even if they don't do the work.*" Another activist, observed that there was tension within the coalition over variable work output, between those who did more work and those who



did less, but that tensions also arose among workers doing equal amounts of work. The activist remarked that much debate on policy and direction happened within CoCo, where all of the committee members put in equal amounts of time. This did not lessen the chance of conflict occurring however.

Another aspect of the centre group's view of the coalition's internal condition was picked up by some of the non-centre activists. This aspect was the centre group's view of "uneven development" where some members of the coalition appeared to have more ability or to have more experience than others. One activist said, "*you are totally not listened to, or are given this attitude like, 'my way or the highway.' That's just the way it is, 'you just don't understand, you need to do more learning' kind of attitude.*"

Another activist who echoed these sentiments felt that the experience of young people in the coalition who had not lived or worked in the third world was not as valued by the centre group as that of young people who had. However, activists from both groups attached positive valuation to the fact that so many young people had volunteered for the coalition, and one young non-centre activist expressed a view which contrasted with the foregoing, namely that older people (she didn't specify which older people) weren't there to tell us "*like it is.*"

By definition, coalitions are about combining differences in a unified project, and the tension posed by these countervailing impulses is a common feature of coalition life. As mentioned above, the threat of disunity was problematic for the centre group which adopted a set of tactics in response. How did the non-centre group view the question of differences within the coalition and how did it view these tactics?

That there were different ideological positions within the coalition was obvious to the non-centre activists. As well, there was an expressed awareness of difference along lines of identity, age, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. With regard to ideological differences, two activists identified a dominant ideological discourse described by one as socialist and the other as Marxist. The source of this discourse was not attributed to the centre group. This discourse, although itself not homogenous was regarded by the activists as excluding other discourses represented within the coalition. These other discourses were: a green or environmental discourse, a black or anarchist discourse and a discourse of political power based on identity.

Concerning identities within the coalition, there were, with one exception, differences rather than cleavages among members. Gender differences were not identified as problematic; this may have been partly the result of there being a high proportion of women in the coalition (out of thirty coalition activists only six were men). While sexism was not identified as a problem, ageism was. As mentioned, some activists observed that tension arose on the issue of inexperience being associated with youth. Difference in sexual orientation was mentioned as evidence of the coalition's heterogeneity and not as problematic in terms of a lack of recognition of its political significance.

With regard to ethnicity, one activist saw evidence of a cultural cleavage within the coalition. The activist described the concentration of young Filipinos in the REM committee as evidence of this. The activist suggested that this came about as a result of people, sharing social familiarity and cultural identity, wanting to create a space for themselves. The activist did not associate this concentration as resulting from racism

within the coalition. One activist did, however, suggest that race *may* have been a factor in creating the cleavage between centre and non-centre groups:

*I think we live in a racist society where people of colour do not have power around race, ethnicity and skin colour. So it is something that I have been thinking about and how much did racism play into how, when people hadn't lived in the third world joined into the coalition and sort of had criticism around a way of organising...how much of that was about racism and about not understanding or learning or whatever, getting what third world politics is about?*

The activist said that this speculation had come out of the final assessment meeting where she had observed that criticism levelled at centre people by non-centre people of colour had been more muted than criticism levelled by non-centre white people. A centre group activist used the word 'discrimination' to describe what was seen as a process of scapegoating where the centre group was singled out for criticism --however this was not clearly described in terms of having a racial component.<sup>42</sup>

Commentary about difference along lines of identity or ideology was not prominent among the non-centre activists, and the existence of these differences was not seen as a threat to coalition unity. A concern expressed by some concerned the lack of a forum for the discussion of differences. This was particularly the case regarding cancellation of the internal education program. One activist saw the cancellation as an unwillingness of the centre group to go into areas where members might disagree. Another activist, agreeing with the position of the centre group, saw this as appropriate for a 'united front' where debates should be kept practical and away from ideology. Others didn't agree with this assessment. One asked, "*...these ideological divisions exist, why hide them? Why pretend that they don't exist, or not do education, when we*

*all know that they are there?"* Others pointed out the benefits of having internal education and debate: it offered members the opportunity to think critically about their own organisations; a wide range of political expression could have addressed power issues in the coalition so that people would feel safe expressing their identities, politics and beliefs; acknowledgement of different positions and ideologies could strengthen the coalition opening it up to build a broad strategy for "*fighting back*." Others pointed out the consequences of *not* having an internal debate: that the dominant exclusive socialist framework tipped the coalition away from having a strong political vision towards a position of dogma and rigidity; that as a result of little internal education, the popular education program suffered from a poverty of analysis; that a failure to integrate an analysis of sexism, classism and racism resulted in women of colour working in the kitchen at the conference, unable to participate in the conference. The majority of non-centre activists thought that debate within the coalition had been stifled and that negative consequences resulted.

In their perception of the internal conditions, the centre group came in for a considerable amount of criticism from the non-centre group. This criticism was not uniform, but most non-centre activists thought that the internal dynamics of the coalition arose as a result of the circumstances created by a core-periphery relationship. Just as the centre group had sought explanations for unsatisfactory or destabilising conditions within the coalition, so some members of the non-centre group attempted to come up with explanations to account for what they saw as the problems in the coalition. As has been mentioned, a number of activists attributed the centre group's connection to organisations in the Philippines as the driving force behind their political

and organisational priorities. Others went further than this to speculate that these priorities were directly influenced by the centre group's connection to the Communist Party of the Philippines, as well as to the ideology and practice of Maoism. According to this version, the centre group adopted a strategy of 'democratic centralism' in its approach to decision-making. Thus, CoCo performed the function of the central committee leading the coalition and blocking input from the other committees. There was a great deal of variation on this point. Another activist who also connected the centre group to Maoist thought and practice talked about the centralising of authority as a "tendency" rather than as a directly verifiable aspect of the centre group's behaviour. Without specific reference to Maoism, one activist who had experience working with third world national liberation struggles, thought that much of the 'behind the scenes' agenda-setting may have developed from a tradition of secrecy common to groups who work with revolutionary movements.

Another activist rejected the Maoist hypothesis completely saying that the informal hierarchy within NTA could not be concluded to have been the result of a Maoist or Marxist-Leninist influence. The activist claimed that non-Marxist-Leninist social movements that professed to be non-hierarchical are often more hierarchical -- albeit covertly-- than Marxist-Leninist ones. This activist's alternative explanation was that the centre group's organising came "*from traditions of organising in very local ways and very contextual ways.*" Another activist situated the problems that arose within the coalition in a local context. She said that problems arose because there was reluctance on the part of the centre group to shape its style of working to accommodate the organisational practices or models of other local social movement communities.

Other commentators saw the interaction --or lack thereof-- between these alternative practices and the dominant coalition practices as key to explaining why internal tensions arose in the coalition. Clearly there were groups and individuals with different ways of organising in the coalition. There were, for example, those in favour of a more process-oriented decision-making model. However, process issues were not brought up for discussion. One commentator observed that during the time that the coalition was running, nobody "*called*" the centre group on its use of power. Apart from objections raised within CoCo, this observation appears to be correct.

Why was the centre group not called to account by those who objected to some of its practices? One explanation offered by a non-centre activist coincided with an observation made by centre activists: there was inconsistent attendance by non-centre activists at the monthly coalition meetings. Therefore, no concerted opposition was possible. Another activist thought that inexperienced activists seeing the very work-oriented condition of the coalition might accept what was "*set up and running*" without questioning the structure or practices encountered. This same activist also thought that people with "*white liberal guilt*" might have been reluctant to criticise women of colour. There was, then, potential for opposition to be expressed to the centre group but there were structural and political reasons offered by members of the non-centre group for why this did not happen. I will explore this issue further in the section on the non-centre group's actions.

## Summary of the non-centre group's organising context.

The non-centre activists came from a variety of social movement backgrounds of Vancouver's radical left. They were attracted to the coalition because it offered an opportunity to build and strengthen local opposition to APEC and the effects of globalisation. The non-centre group's evaluation of the left explains, to some extent, why NTA offered an opportunity to pursue this goal. Regarding the left as broad but shallow, and successful in mounting short-term mobilisations only, NTA offered an opportunity to protest the AELM, build international solidarity and strengthen the movement for social justice in Vancouver. Some harboured the hope that NTA might provide the basis for a more permanent oppositional organisation.

This opposition was to be constructed around a concept of anti-imperialism which the groups affiliated with the PWC promoted as the legitimate expression of opposition to APEC in Vancouver. According to the non-centre group's view, the centre group formed a core group within the coalition because of its degree of consolidation, its use of the PWC as the NTA office and its connection to anti-imperialist groups in the Philippines where the 1996 AELM had been held. According to the non-centre activists, the greater consolidation of the centre group affected the internal conditions of the coalition. The non-centre group regarded the centre group as having more power and influence within the coalition, and, as such, its positioning constituted an informal or 'hidden' hierarchy within the coalition. It was perceived to exercise its disproportionate power and influence through unilateral decision-making, 'behind the scenes' as it were. Also CoCo was believed to be operating beyond its mandate, becoming a mechanism of the hierarchy. CoCo was the one site in the

coalition where ideological and organisational debate between centre and non-centre activists occurred. In this debate the preferences of the non-centre activists did not prevail. While the non-centre group characterised decision-making by the non-centre group as problematic, there were other areas of discontent regarding internal democracy. These included the inaccessibility of a pre-determined coalition agenda and a lack of consensus process, particularly in monthly coalition meetings. Non-centre activists viewed as undemocratic the exclusion from influence in the coalition of those regarded as inexperienced, or as contributing less work. Tactics used in debate to solidify the position of the centre group or to close debate were seen non-centre group activists as unfair. With previous experience of democratic practices different from the practices encountered in NTA, non-centre activists questioned the role and influence of the centre group.

The non-centre activists viewed the lack of internal education or debate on political and identity-based differences within the coalition as unsatisfactory. Some felt that as a result, a dominant socialist discourse excluded their own perspectives. Others felt that acknowledgement of differences of identity and ideology would have created an opportunity for people to build a stronger base of activism by bringing people's politics and personal experiences into the work of the coalition. For these reasons, there was a strong feeling among the non-centre activists that shutting down the internal education program was a backward step.

Members of the non-centre group constructed a framework to interpret the actions of the centre group. Various hypotheses were forwarded, some identifying the centre group's political tradition and connections with revolutionary groups in the



Philippines as explanations for the strategies of power used within the coalition.

Others considered the strategies employed by the centre group to be contingent and pragmatic.

The non-centre group members differed in their views on these issues. One activist thought that the internal conditions of the coalition conformed with his expectation of coalition life. This assessment was based on the limited role that a 'united front' should perform in a campaign of protest. Others brought with them higher expectations of how the coalition should function internally and how it could potentially further the local left movement. Every member of the non-centre group interviewed was aware of the tensions and divisions within the coalition. With the exception of the non-centre activists in CoCo, none of the non-centre activists felt willing or able to address the problems and issues arising from these tensions and divisions during the life of the coalition.

#### Actions of the non-centre group.

The internal conditions of the coalition led people to question whether or not they should stay. One activist described a build up to this questioning, *"In terms of processing things out, making a better decision-making model.... what I found was that your frustrations built up more and more and the more frustration, the less you want to be part of it."* While most people decided to stay with the coalition, some did not. One person who stayed with the coalition but concentrated his anti-APEC work elsewhere became frustrated with what he perceived as a disinclination of the coalition to

"broaden out" its work or to make a statement about what it was "for." Two of the non-centre activists reported knowing people who had made a decision to leave the coalition as a result of the internal conditions: "*people left feeling burnt out....the rigidity of the power structure meant that people were pushed out.*" Some left but not permanently; one described making a decision to "deactivate" so that a return would be possible at a later time. Another talked about the importance of taking a holiday to regain perspective in making the decision to stay or leave.

For those who had doubts about staying, the main reason given for continuing to support the coalition's work was because they felt that the mission of the coalition was important. Two activists remarked that despite their misgivings, they stayed because there were no other alternatives within the APEC oppositional forces that took a clear anti-imperialist and rejectionist line. Thus, the collective identity, which contained much of the centre group's vision and political orientation was sufficient to keep them in the coalition over the long haul. As a militant anti-imperialist organisation which reached for a "deep" analysis of globalisation, NTA was the 'only game in town.'

This reason was also given by those who stayed but chose not to challenge the problem areas encountered. One of the activists who felt that the political position of his constituency was not represented within the dominant discourse stated, "*there was no partnership in NTA but I don't have any regrets. If they had wanted to they could have chosen to involve us, they could have .. but they didn't. I was not there to fight, I was there to support.*" Another acknowledged the support both within and outside of the coalition for the PWC which led the member group

represented by the activist to have *"a sober assessment at the time, that whatever arguments were made, and if we didn't win the argument of the day, we had to live with it."* Another activist put in the position of whether or not to challenge the perceived problems said, *"It's a question of will I let this go because the work's so important? And that's a decision I made a few times."* The picture emerges of coalition members coming from different political backgrounds who, though not finding the conditions in the coalition satisfactory, were, nonetheless, prepared to live with the circumstances for the duration. They made this decision based on the belief that the coalition was doing good work.

The main motive for this reluctant acquiescence appears to have been the same motive given by the centre activists for proposing the ending of the internal education program --to preserve the unity of the coalition. Both sets of decisions were made with the intention of preserving the equilibrium and integrity of the coalition. However, they were different in as much as the internal education program was seen by the centre group as dispensable, given the availability of other forms of education and therefore its demise did not constitute a compromise. The decision to avoid making a challenge was regarded by the non-centre activists as an unfortunate but necessary compromise. Nevertheless, what is clear is that despite the different strategies employed, all of its members were motivated to maintain NTA's collective identity and to keep the coalition together.

Having decided to stay and to continue the work, the non-centre activists utilised the committee structure as a way of surviving the internal conditions. The committee structure offered an opportunity for activists within the coalition to

contribute work according to their constituency and campaign priority. For example, activists with ties to the local community who regarded the march and rally to be of prime importance ended up in MOB; those with an interest in campaign promotion and community education gravitated towards REM. CoCo attracted those who, as representatives of their own committees, were also interested in organising the conference. This arrangement constituted a division of labour and was not controversial.

However, the committee system also gave non-centre activists who experienced problems with the internal conditions a means to deal with those problems. In a sense, committee work offered a shelter from the problems of the larger coalition. An activist who expressed objections to the dominant socialist discourse, said, *"my way of dealing with that was to locate myself in places where I could work and feel some kind of affiliation with the people that I could work with."* Whereas divisions were apparent in the coalition as a whole, the committees, according to one activist, *"were able to achieve unity and made it easier to achieve intensity of work."* With the exception of CoCo where the tensions afflicting the coalition remained unresolved, the committees also engendered their own culture. An activist in the REM committee spoke of an *"anti-imperialist-feminist"* group identity which pulled the members together. The MOB committee was characterised by this same activist as a more 'task-oriented' committee with less of a sense of camaraderie.

## Summary of non-centre group actions.

Coming face to face with the circumstances arising from the internal conditions of the coalition, some non-centre group members left the coalition --but most stayed. Those who stayed adopted strategies to continue the work of the coalition. For some this was taking 'time out' from the coalition, others found ways to turn the existing structure of the coalition to their advantage by focusing work within the committees to which they belonged. As I indicate in chapter 7, this action had consequences because it exacerbated the cleavage within the coalition leading to a disassociation of its local and international priorities. Those who had considered leaving, but did not, stayed because they thought the work of the coalition and what the coalition stood for, overrode the dissatisfactions that they had. Furthermore, there were no other suitable avenues of protest available within the APEC oppositional movement.

Those who made decisions to avoid challenging the perceived power structure, did so for the same reasons, considering a challenge to be a potential threat to coalition unity. Those who challenged the perceived power structure did so from a discrete area of the coalition: within CoCo. By the time of the final assessment meeting the need for restraint to maintain the coalition's unity had disappeared. At this meeting (see p. 94 ) the issues that had not been made public during the course of the coalition's existence, came to the surface.

## **Chapter 7: MOB, CoCo and No! To APEC's final act.**

As mentioned, one of the strategies adopted by the non-centre activists was to concentrate their work in a committee of choice. People had always gone to work in the committees which most suited their political and social needs. However, the committees also evolved in ways that reflected the problems in the coalition, that is, the rift in the coalition started to show up in the relationship between CoCo and MOB. In turn, the problems in this relationship further compounded one already-existing aspect of this rift which was a dissociation of the coalition's local and international priorities. In this section I will examine the relationship between CoCo and MOB and how problems expressed by the non-centre group about the conference reflected the bifurcation of these priorities.

The Mobilisation Committee was responsible for organising the march and rally. This was conceived by the coalition to be a major event that would bring to a conclusion the year and a half of campaigning. In March of 1997, the New Socialist group joined the coalition. The New Socialists are a Canadian socialist group dedicated to working in social movements towards building a broad movement of progressive radicalism. One of the members described attending the coalition meetings for a short period in order to get a sense of where *"things were at politically"* in the coalition: *"we realised early on that it was going to be very difficult to open that coalition up and build a broader movement, however, the mobilising committee offered that opportunity."* They saw the MOB committee, rather than the coalition as a whole, to be a vehicle for building local opposition to

APEC. Its three members were experienced activists and they were the most consistently present in the MOB committee. They provided much of the impetus for the local organising. As mentioned they were identified by activists from both the centre group and the non-centre group as being the only other point of consolidation within the coalition. As a result of the MOB committee becoming revitalised and establishing a strong presence within the coalition,<sup>43</sup> tension arose between it and CoCo. As one activist remarked, *"the MOB committee was one axis of a lot of tensions and CoCo was the project of the core Filipino group and they were not always on the same wavelengths."*

A fundamental tension arose from different visions held by members of MOB and CoCo concerning the work of the MOB committee. The New Socialist group was interested in 'broadening' involvement in the MOB committee to include as many groups and individuals from the local community as possible. To facilitate this goal MOB considered changing the name of the committee to the 'November 25<sup>th</sup> committee' and not making membership of the coalition a condition of involvement with the committee. A MOB activist recalled that this proposal ran counter to the idea expressed by one of the centre group CoCo representatives that membership was required of those interested in contributing to the work of the coalition. The MOB activist in this case had a different reading of the relationship of the committees to the rest of the coalition. This example also illustrates an issue of difference among NTA activists concerning NTA's mandate as narrow (or instrumental) vs broad. I will discuss this tension in chapter eight.

the committees as necessitating requests being made in this way. One centre activist denied that CoCo did not "trust" MOB saying that the requests bore the signature of respect for the autonomy of MOB. Four members of the non-centre group and one member of the centre group remarked on the tension between the two committees. With regard to the examples cited above one MOB member observed:

*(There was a) very strong breakdown of communication between CoCo and MOB and a lack of trust where ...xx.. would come to MOB and ask that these speakers would be included in the demo and MOB would have this defensive reaction, well, "you don't know all the work that we have done determining speakers, we want it to happen this way and we have a certain timeline and na na na...and that left the CoCo people feeling invalidated and the MOB people feeling defensive...so I wish that had happened differently.*

The CoCo representative wanted international delegates who did not have a chance to speak at the conference to have a chance to speak at the rally. A MOB activist stated that the request almost felt like "*international delegates versus local delegates.*"

Although the centre group was as concerned as the non-centre group to have a successful march and rally, the centre group's 'project' was the conference.<sup>44</sup> MOB was the location where activists interested in organising local opposition to APEC gravitated. The incident cited above illustrates the primary split between the centre group's priorities and those of many of the non-centre group who were more focused on organising locally for the march and rally. MOB and CoCo became the emblems for this difference in priority. Where the priorities clashed, as in the incident mentioned above, tension resulted. But these priorities did not often clash, and as I have mentioned regarding the two debates in the coalition meetings, only as



Poor communication caused tension between the two committees. There were several changes of MOB representatives sitting on CoCo and at times there was no representative sitting on CoCo. One of the MOB activists acknowledged that this may have unfortunately contributed to a rift in the coalition but felt that having a more consistent representative would have given CoCo a better means of controlling MOB. This comment was consistent with the belief among non-centre activists that CoCo had gone beyond its mandate of reflecting the coalition's decisions and was instead directing the coalition. For this activist, a rift was regarded as inevitable and not worth putting resources into fixing given the slim chances of changing the democratic structure from within.

The centre group had accepted that, as one activist put it, "*the non-Filipino Canadians in the coalition were in a better position to do the mobilisation because of their connections to the community.*" However, there was a problem which arose from this division of labour. A centre activist commented that because of poor MOB representation, CoCo did not know until two weeks before the march and rally what was planned for that event. On two occasions leading up to the march, CoCo representatives approached members of the MOB committee to see whether details of the mobilisation could be changed. The first was a request that more of the conference's international delegates be speakers at the rally, the second was a request to change the starting time of the march. Both of these requests were regarded by some MOB activists as signs that CoCo was concerned about losing control of MOB or that CoCo was interfering with the democratic decision-making of the MOB committee. The centre activists interpreted these requests differently; they regarded the poor communication between

questions of logistics. Like other deep-rooted tensions they remained submerged most of the time. However, there was a price to pay for keeping the peace.

Keeping the peace required that the two priorities did not interfere with each other. This stand-off hindered any possibility of assimilating elements of one priority area into the other. The conference's design and content left many of the non-centre activists dissatisfied with the conference as the culmination of the coalition's work. Because the conference was a more complex and lengthy event than the march and rally, this lack of assimilation was more evident in the contentious landscape of the conference. However, as we have seen, there were aspects of the march which were problematic for the centre group whose priority was the international gathering.

The centre group made defining the objectives of the conference a priority. As mentioned, the centre group attached great importance to holding an anti-imperialist conference with a strong accent on international solidarity. Moreover, the centre group wanted to bring awareness of the national liberation struggle in the Philippines to the APEC opposition movement in Vancouver. The conference achieved these objectives, but with regard to achieving international solidarity, many of the non-centre activists felt that the 'local' part of 'international' was missing.

NTA activists from all member organisations counted the *symbolic* demonstration of international solidarity as an achievement. However, there were many criticisms of the conference by the non-centre activists regarding the achievement of substantive international solidarity. They complained that local activists or local issues were inadequately represented at the conference and that local struggles were not connected in a meaningful way to third world struggles. One commented that most of

the local people at the conference were volunteers rather than participants. Another argued that the speakers representing the North American perspective (with the exception of B. Lightbowm) did not reflect a grassroots activist viewpoint and another activist stated that the presenters did not represent the diversity of the coalition in terms of gender or youth.

Of equal salience was the view that an inadequate connection was made between the political contexts of North and South. This was summed up by one activist in the following words, "*there was no connection made between the experience of the Philippines and downtown Vancouver and Canada.*" Non-centre activists identified the primary obstacle to making this kind of connection: the historical differences in conditions, and the resulting different types of radicalism that come out of those conditions, respectively, in North and South. One activist pointed out the need to wrestle with contrasts between issues of mass-based revolutionary politics in a country like the Philippines and the political issues coming out of the non-revolutionary conditions in a country like Canada. Other comments pointed out the difference between the history of pluralism or 'looseness' of radical politics in the North compared to those of the South where national liberation provides a point of convergence for many different political interests. The overall sentiment expressed by the non-centre activists was that the conference did not seek ways to explore these differences in an analytical way towards arriving at a politics of relevance to both South and North.

Events at the conference also triggered unresolved political issues which had developed during the course of the coalition's history. For example, two non-centre activists commented on the predominance of speakers who overtly expressed Maoist

politics and/or the politics of the Communist Party of the Philippines at the conference. One activist thought that this was inconsistent with the spirit of pluralism expected as part of coalition membership. For another activist, this presence was regarded as consistent with what was an unspoken but "*dominant politic*" of undeclared ideological bias in the coalition. Another activist commented on the "*inaccessible language*" of anti-imperialist rhetoric. Of key importance was an incident that happened at the conference when a delegate pointed out that the rhetoric of equality heard was not matched by the practice of relying on women to staff the conference kitchen. This observation was later connected by non-centre activists to the coalition's inability to include adequate internal education in its program.

The issues that came about as a result of the tensions between MOB and CoCo did so as a result of the failure of the coalition to incorporate its international and local priorities into a common plan. The conference was the embodiment of this failure. While it succeeded in many respects, a large number of people in the coalition felt that the work of the coalition itself was not represented at the conference and that the groundwork necessary to encourage a meaningful dialogue between movements from North and South had not been established. This outcome was at least partly the result of a separation of priorities which had its genesis in the history of the coalition's development, to which I will now turn.

## ***Chapter 8: Discussion of the findings and Conclusions***

So far I have elucidated the ways in which the two main groupings within the coalition interpreted the external and internal conditions of the coalition. The problems and issues identified as arising from these conditions led each group to take certain actions as a way of dealing with their circumstances. We are now in a position to examine the consequences of these actions as the key to understanding the evolutionary processes of the coalition. The actions taken by one group changed the circumstances of the other group, prompting a further series of actions and interactions which deepened the division within the coalition leading to a separation of the coalition's local and international priorities. In the first part of this chapter I examine in detail the processes that led to this outcome.

While this process can be mapped in a fairly straightforward way, there were three crucial elements in the story's unfolding which influenced the direction of the main plot. First, there were certain features of NTA's membership composition and formal structure that biased the evolution of the coalition. How interaction between the groups occurred should be seen in the context of the differential consolidation of the membership groupings and in terms of the absence of system reflexivity. Second, the determination of membership objectives which led to conflict had their root in allegiances formed by attachment to different histories and political priorities that people brought with them into the coalition. Third, there was ambiguity in the definition and limits of coalition work across NTA's membership such that people's expectations of how NTA should conduct its affairs and achieve its goals differed. I

will hypothesise the part played by these 'sub-plots' or frameworks in the development of the coalition in the second part of this chapter.

### Consequences of the actions of centre and non-centre groups.

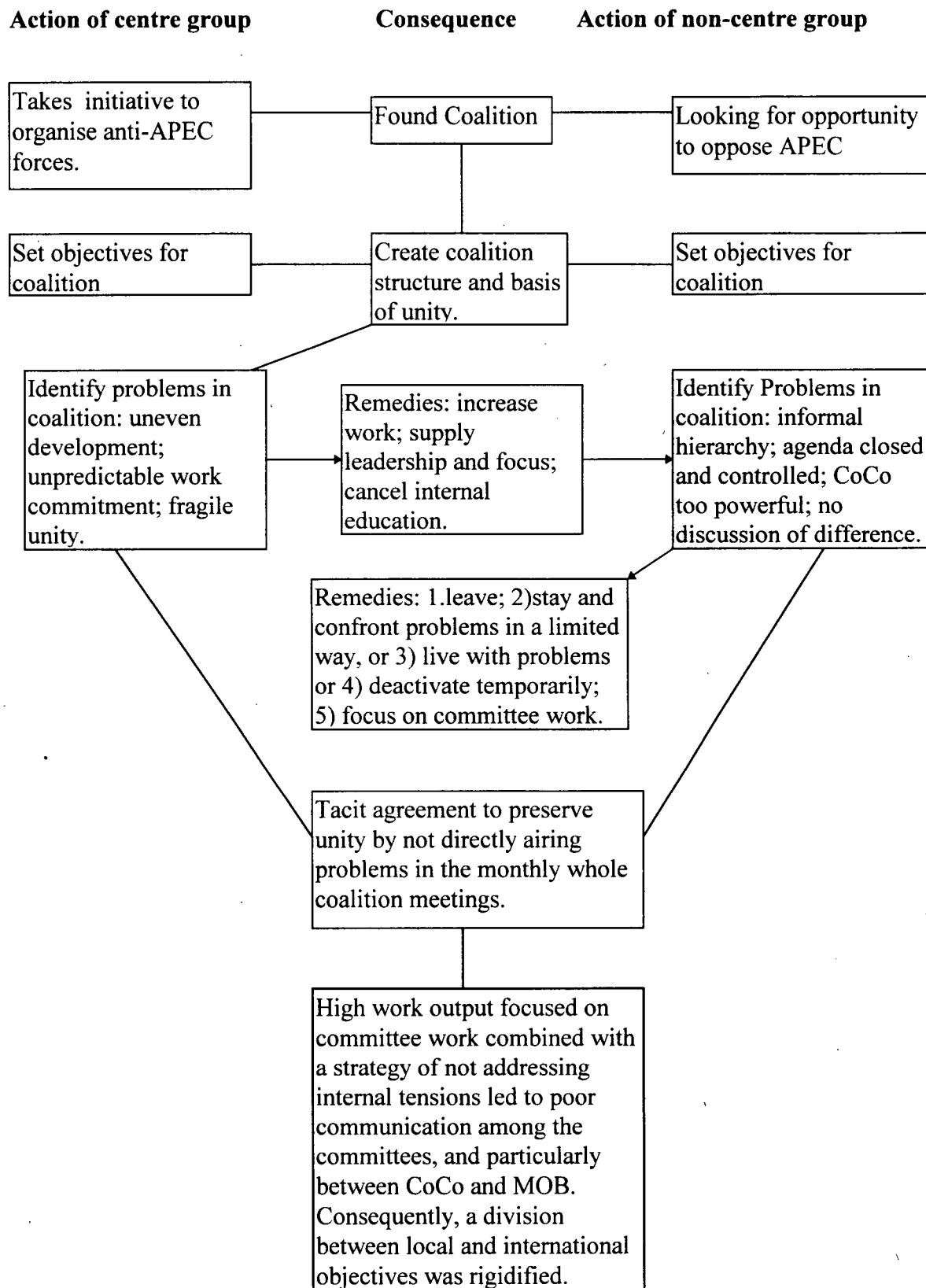
Before examining the division within the coalition more closely, the following is a reminder of what brought the coalition together. The coalition's collective identity was based on a collaboration between groups and individuals responding to a set of conditions imposed by the arrival of the AELM in Vancouver. This identity was formed out of a mutually agreed upon positioning of the coalition in relation to both adversaries and other social movement organisations in the 'multiorganisational field.' It held the coalition together because it met the political needs of its members --there were no other alternative or rival organisations to which people wished to give their support. All parties, both groups, took action to avoid conflict in order to maintain the unity of the coalition. In fact, other than for several animated debates, and a conflict that was not made public, a casual observer would not have been able to tell that there was anything like a division within the coalition. Most interactions among coalition members were amicable most of the time. NTA was, to all intents and purposes, an energetic and committed group of individuals pursuing common political goals. However, as revealed in the findings so far, tensions moved tensions beneath the surface.

These tensions came about as the result of a series of interpretations of the internal coalition made by actors in each group. Fig 1. Illustrates the flow of actions

and consequences of the actions which arose as a result of these interpretations. The remedies for the problems identified as arising from the internal conditions by the centre group were measures to maintain the continuity, focus and unity of the coalition. These measures produced a set of circumstances which were interpreted as problematic by the non-centre group. What was intended by the centre group to be leadership was interpreted by the non-centre group to be an undisclosed or informal hierarchy at work, what was intended by the centre group to be decisiveness was interpreted by the non-centre group as unacceptable decision-making,<sup>45</sup> and what was intended to be a measure to avoid disunity, cancelling of the internal education, was interpreted by some in the non-centre group as an attempt to suppress internal debate essential for movement building.

The remedies chosen by the non-centre group were no less strategic than those of the centre group but they tended to be reactive rather than pro-active. Unlike the consolidated centre group, the unconsolidated non-centre group was unable to organise a unified response to what it considered to be unsatisfactory internal conditions. Also, because the problems identified by both groups were never made public, there were no grounds for examining or collectively refuting the interpretations which underlay the problems perceived by both groups. Where the problems were raised for debate, within the confines of CoCo, a stalemate occurred and the substantive issues did not change. The fact that the issues were not raised at the whole coalition meeting attests to the sense that a stalemate or worse was feared by all sides.

**Figure 1** Showing the relationship of actions, action consequences and outcomes in NTA.





This fear was referred to by a member of the centre group who, when asked whether such a discussion would have been useful, replied that the coalition would likely have disintegrated. Instead of open debate about internal issues and problems, political tensions became translated into confrontations over logistics. Thus, there was a lot at stake for all parties involved in the coalition. Should the issues be raised there was no guarantee that, given their complexity, a resolution would be reached and a lot would be lost if a debate ended in acrimony and deeper division.

However, there was a price to pay for not dealing with these tensions. By not addressing the issues that arose in the coalition, observations and assumptions made by one group about the other remained unexamined. This led to an intensification of the fracture within the coalition. For example, one of the remedies chosen by non-centre activists to deal with the problems of the internal environment was to leave, permanently or temporarily. This could not help but reinforce the view of the centre group that there was an unreliable work commitment in the coalition. Moreover, variable work commitment could be construed as 'uneven development' given that one of the characteristics of this condition defined by members of the centre group was an inability to recognise the urgency of the work required to pursue the coalition's objectives. On the other side, without having the opportunity to know about the concerns of the centre group for the survival and direction of the coalition, there was no way of knowing that its actions were largely pragmatic. Consequently there was no information available to dispel or qualify the notion that the centre group was acting on the precepts of Maoist practice, or on directives from the Philippines. The perceptions

and speculations of both groups remained unexamined. As a result, the two groupings became entrenched in their views of the internal conditions.

This entrenchment was a gradual process which increased as the work of the coalition became more intense. One activist commented on the move from the reflexivity of the GRWDG to the work orientation of the final phases of the coalition:

*That was something that started to fall away as APEC started more and more. I was coming from a place where I thought there was really excellent stuff happening, in terms of addressing power issues, thinking about those things and about having really strong convictions and about supporting each other and working well together...it was all happening and then there was quite a contrast...it was more subtle and there was a lot of overlap in terms of some people who worked for NTA, there was an overlap which gave me a sense of security and comfort and familiarity....then there was not a way of working, it was very subtle and I all of a sudden realised that I was not doing my work any more, I was taken over.*

The prioritisation of campaign work over debate was confirmed by one of the centre activists who stated that the internal education became, not just a potential source of division, but of secondary importance given the momentum of the campaign. Work, and issues related to the campaign, became the only issues discussed in open debate by the coalition's members, "*our objectives might be different at different times but at least we can focus on what we have to do for a specific campaign,*" said one of the centre activists. Thus, the unwillingness of the groups to discuss the underlying tensions was facilitated by the narrowing of the coalition's focus to one of task orientation.

Focusing work in committees did not resolve the coalition's underlying tensions however. As MOB began to assert its presence within the coalition so it became a point of consolidation differentiated from the consolidation of the centre group. This counter-

positioning of MOB to the centre group whose power within the coalition was regarded by non-centre activists as residing in CoCo, resulted in an insuperable tension between the coalition's local and international priorities. Furthermore, the tension between the priorities, cannot be seen as simply the result of competing agendas between two committees. Rather, these different sets of goals arose in the context of the complex interactions between centre and non-centre groups that I have so far discussed.

The conference brought to a head some of the strains within the coalition. These strains were apparent by November 11th. This was the date of the pre-conference assessment meeting, the purpose of which was to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the NTA campaign so that a presentation of the coalition's work could be made at the conference. Including myself, only three non-centre members turned up to what should have been a crucial meeting in the life of the coalition. The low turnout was explained by one of the centre activists as NTA members' "lack of pride" in the work that they had done for the coalition. While the reasons for the low turnout of non-centre activists is not clear, given the evidence presented so far, an educated guess would suggest that the non-centre group's sense of alienation from the project of the conference might be a factor. Analysing the division in the coalition between local and international priorities one activist summed up the genesis of this alienation as arising from a,

*....tension between the basic core Filipino current which had a totally international perspective and was mostly concerned about Filipino issues and only secondarily about Canadian issues although many of the young people are Filipino Canadians, so it's not like they are not concerned about....it is just that they are more concerned about their former homeland and generally have a more internationalist perspective. I come from a very internationalist perspective myself, so I understand*

*that. Within the MOB committee there was dealing with lots of people who were concerned about local issues and with communities that had specific issues. These people didn't like APEC and had their own reasons, but certainly there was a bit of pressure to focus on more local issues and more specific issues and not so much on internationalism, not that much identification with the Philippines per se and that particular struggle.*

The two major interest orientations formed a critical part of the contextual conditions of the coalition and were likely present from the start of the coalition. Although not formally articulated, these orientations were decisive in shaping the circumstances from which problems arose. However, one must be careful not to draw the picture of a segregated coalition where the MOB committee comes to be absolutely associated with the non-centre activists and CoCo with the centre activists. CoCo did have two non-centre activists sitting on it most of the time and there was an avenue for communication between the two committees at the monthly meetings. REM had both centre and non-centre activists sitting on it and was critically involved in networking with local activist groups. Activists from both groups were involved in putting on the local conferences which preceded the PCAIG.

Bearing in mind these qualifications, there *was* a demarcation between local and international priorities within the coalition which became evident at the culmination of the coalition's campaign. The comments made by the non-centre activists about a lack of local input into the conference have their parallel in the lack of input that centre activists felt that they had into important details of the march and rally. Both groups felt excluded from the area of coalition priority commanded by the other. These areas conformed to the division of labour which was agreed to by the coalition participants;

however, the boundaries between these areas became rigidified as a result of the processes named earlier where observations, assumptions and attributions made by members of one group about the other did not get aired. Without making the tensions open to public scrutiny and debate, there was no way to reorganise or adjust the structure of the coalition to deal with the difficulties that arose. Instead, the already existing structures of resources, communication pathways and committees became either enlisted or blocked in a process which heightened tensions between the two groups. Also, the onus on workload over reflexivity created a climate that did not allow for the sources of these tensions to be examined. Members of both groups calculated that living with the tensions was the best way to keep the coalition together.

For this reason the coalition stayed together --although the collective identity around which it formed became weakened. As stated in chapter four, by the end of the NTA campaign, some activists, all of whom were members of the non-centre group, had started to question the sharp distinction between NTA and the PS. The recognition of overlapping agendas between the PS and NTA by some non-centre activists was likely not simply a re-evaluation of the multi-organisational field based on new information reaching the activists from outside of the coalition. The identification of intermediary positions between the two organisations also likely came about as a result of the coalition's internal tensions which caused some non-centre activists to question the validity of NTA's collective identity so much of which embodied the anti-imperialist politics of the centre group. One activist conceived of a spectrum within the whole lower mainland field of opposition to APEC. On the question of 'engagement' the activist described a polarity of the NTA centre group at the 'non-engagement' end and

the Canadian Labour Congress at the 'engagement' end. Notwithstanding these doubts about the distinctiveness of the coalition's collective identity, NTA's unambiguous and 'grassroots' militant public stand was sufficient to keep most people in the coalition.

While the coalition accomplished its objectives, it did so at the cost of achieving any lasting solidarity among the coalition members, and hence of forming any substantial ongoing anti-imperialist work.<sup>46</sup> Despite the generally good day-to-day working relationships that were part of coalition life, the issues and problems which arose from the unacknowledged rift caused some hard feelings on both sides which made collaboration beyond the 'final act' difficult to achieve.

When I talked to members of the centre group after the final assessment meeting, there was clearly a sense of injury at some of the criticism which had emerged. One activist, talking about how the actions of the centre group were perceived within the coalition, stated, *"if it's coming from us it has a negative impact, if it is coming from us it is a really big deal."* Another activist felt that there had not been much solidarity with groups from the Philippines within the coalition from the beginning and that much of the criticism was *"sour grapes"* because, unlike the centre group, non-centre group activists were unable to bring conference delegates of their choice from the South.

Members of the centre group vigorously countered many of the assertions made by non-centre group activists about them. When asked about a dominant Maoist politic in the coalition one activist pointed out that the centre group had succeeded in its methods and tactics, the fruits of the successful organising were there for all to see -- *"the best thing is to look at them and learn from them, rather than saying, 'oh they are Maoists, Fidelists or Leninists or Trotskyists.'* For me those are all labels that have no

*meaning. At the end of the day you should be evaluated by how much you have managed to mobilise people.*" Pragmatism, and attachment to justice for the third world defined the political profile of the centre group. In a remark somewhat illustrative of the local-international tension in the coalition one centre activist said, "Maybe it's time for them (the critics) to learn from mass movements outside of Canada. *This is one time where people from the third world and from a third world movement have pushed through with a political activity that mobilised a lot of people.*"

Ironically, perhaps, in the light of this remark, many of the non-centre activists had been motivated to join the coalition inspired by the work of the centre group. They had responded positively to the groups in the PWC because of their experience of third world struggle, their long history of local organising and their strong sense of being connected to a larger struggle. While many of the non-centre activists were disappointed, and in some cases felt alienated, by aspects of the campaign mentioned above, they nonetheless stayed the course. The fact that they did so indicates that the coalition provided political and strategic opportunities which they could not otherwise obtain. Furthermore, what joined the two groups, NTA's collective identity, though subject to some questioning, stayed intact. That the coalition stayed together suggests that, despite the tensions, there was common cause and a sense of achievement on a number of issues at the heart of the coalition. This was reflected in a number of positive comments that were made at the final meeting by members from centre and non-centre groups.

At the final meeting a number of accomplishments were spoken about, more than I have space for here. That the coalition had stayed together for a year and a half

was counted as an achievement. Many activists agreed that NTA was able to establish a clear anti-imperialist position in the local APEC debate. This radical critique was able to bring into focus the underlying forces propelling globalisation and examined the impact of these forces on countries of North and South. The educational work done to propagate this critique came in for praise. Outreach work and networking were noted as gains and there was universal acclaim for the march and rally. Although the conference received mixed reviews, there was a sense that some measure of international solidarity had been achieved, and there was testimony that the international delegates were impressed with the results of the activism that they witnessed in Vancouver. Finally, during the interviews a number of NTA activists from both groups pointed out that during the life of the coalition there were real moments of solidarity and emotional bonding between the participants.

### Three sources of disunity

Coalitions by nature are organisations that bring together groups whose political ideologies, frames of reference and sets of objectives have not been formed in the crucible of interaction with each other. NTA was no different in this respect. The APEC leader's summit brought into NTA groups and individuals affected by globalisation, the world historic event of advanced or post-Fordist capitalism. APEC provided an issue which engaged the core values of those who had witnessed the downsizing, cutbacks and marginalisation of vulnerable groups in the North and the exploitation and increased oppression of workers and peasants in the South. Those who



put NTA together or joined it and stayed with it, did so because its orientation to the other actors in the multiorganisational field created a distinct collective identity based on revolutionary politics and grassroots activism. This identity was a key factor in keeping the coalition together.

NTA's inclusion of the various problems created by globalisation under the 'master-frame' (Snow and Benford 1992; Gerhards and Rucht 1992) of anti-imperialism<sup>47</sup> was successful in mobilising a cross-section of Vancouver's left. NTA's campaign was successful because the master-frame concept of 'imperialist globalisation' included elements which bridged the issue-framing of a number of different movements. The NTA newsletter included articles on inequality between North and South, the corporate and intergovernmental agents maintaining that inequality, the exploitation of workers in North and South, the effects of globalisation on women and the destruction of social programs in the North. While the master-frame of imperialist globalisation provided a basis for collaboration and a collective identity, it was not effective in offsetting a disconnection between groups whose understanding of the term was inspired by the experience of those who 'live in countries where imperialist globalisation takes its heaviest toll,' and those whose experience was largely confined to resistance in the 'belly of the (imperialist) beast.' (These quotes are taken from the 1997 PCAIG General Declaration see Appendix 5, p.354).

While cultural and symbolic aspects of social movement organisation such as framing are important elements in mobilisation, the process of mobilisation itself may undermine or not meet the prescriptive elements<sup>48</sup> of the frame employed. NTA was undoubtedly successful in building local opposition to APEC. It was less successful in

one of its stated goals which was to 'strengthen international anti-imperialist solidarity.'<sup>49</sup> While there were meaningful public displays of solidarity both at the conference and at the march, the lack of dialogue between local and international contingents cast doubt on the substance of the solidarity achieved. The concerns raised by the non-centre group regarding the conference suggest that while international solidarity was a goal of all members of the coalition, there was divergence in approaches to achieving it. This divergence raises questions about how international solidarity is conceptualised and the feasibility of North-South alliances. Chapter 11 of this thesis will examine these questions in more depth. At this point, by way of conclusion, I will look at three underlying vectors of the process which led to this goal only being partially met.

This process is one of the main, albeit unspoken stories, of NTA. It involves three related sub-plots concerning internal structure and process, core allegiances, and different views on the characteristics of coalitions. The first subplot examines the relationship between coalition structure and process and the effect that historical factors unique to NTA --the presence of a consolidated core group and the emergence of a second consolidated group-- had on this relationship. The second sub-plot that I identify concerns a somewhat amorphous, yet influential, aspect of coalition geography. In this section I maintain that the cultural values and political histories that members bring with them into the 'temporary belief space' create barriers to unity. The third sub-plot concerns the effect that competing versions of coalition organising had on NTA's development.

### *Structure and process*

A coalition is a federated multi-organisational field. While constitutional documents such as the basis of unity are put in place to establish a means by which the member organisations can agree to work together, this agreement is potentially challenged by the independent organisational maintenance needs of the individual members (Staggenborg 1986). As a result a tension arises between the centripetal force of unity and the centrifugal force of independent action. Each impulse has a constraining effect on the other; the need for unity constrains independent action which might threaten the viability of the coalition, the need for unity is limited by the member organisation's need to meet its goals through the coalition. Because of its position as the coalition's core group, the centre group's initiatives were more palpable and the consequences of its actions and direction more far-reaching than those of the less consolidated non-centre group. The centre group's initiatives tended to arouse resistance in the non-centre group putting a strain on the centripetal principles of cooperation outlined in NTA's basic principles.<sup>50</sup>

The centre group played a major role in initiating the building of the coalition, it provided a headquarters for the coalition's activities, provided at least half of the coalition's personnel, and made a primary contribution to the coalition's collective mobilisation frame. Its position as the core group is beyond dispute. Its consolidated position flowed from these assets, as well as from its internal unity. This unity sprung from the centre group being a representative body of the Filipino community in Vancouver as well as from its project of promoting justice in the Philippines and on behalf of justice in the third world in general. The centre group interpreted its core-

group role in terms of leadership. The assumption of this role came from two sources. First, that it had the qualifications for the job, namely the organising background and familiarity with the political issues of the campaign, and second that as a result of its consolidated position within the coalition it had the opportunity to do the job. However, qualification and opportunity form only part of the explanatory picture. The centre group was *motivated* to use its leadership because it saw the need to tackle deficiencies or difficulties perceived to be part of the coalition's internal conditions. The centre group evaluated these conditions as somewhat symptomatic of the radical left micro-mobilisation contexts from which the coalition's members had been recruited. The centre group was motivated to maintain the coalition so that the coalition could reach its collective goals, and of special priority to the centre group, the goals of the conference.

The centre group had the advantage of consolidation within the coalition environment and there was no specific conflict-resolution mechanism or coalition-wide willingness to address the resulting disproportionate weight of its influence. The centre-group's leadership was evident to all, but because it was not openly or formally recognised, it could neither operate completely effectively or be easily challenged. As a result frustrations arose on all sides. While the weight of the centre group's influence was not in itself identified as problematic by the non-centre group, the way in which its influence was exercised *was* identified as problematic. Both the means by which the leadership was perceived to be enacted and the problems that it was directed towards ameliorating became contentious issues for many of the non-centre activists. These actions created tensions which resulted in a division between the core and the periphery of the coalition. Unable to formally delegate, the centre group's leadership was

restricted in its scope of operation and, as a result, its members took on increasingly greater responsibility for the running and survival of the coalition. This further added to the tensions within the coalition.

The arrival of the New Socialist group, the only other consolidated grouping in the coalition, both changed and sustained these dynamics. In the first place, it greatly expanded the capacity of the coalition to organise its local mobilising objectives, the networking that was already being undertaken by the REM committee. The centre group was positive about this arrangement, acknowledging the experience of the local activists in undertaking this role. The strengthening of the MOB committee's role in the coalition reinforced the division of labour which the committee system was designed to provide. At the same time, MOB's resurgence tended to crystallise the existing tensions between core and periphery into a division between international and local priorities. This division was not a consciously determined strategy on the part of MOB --or for that matter on the part of CoCo. Rather, it came about as a result of the linking between *structural* characteristics of the coalition, the formal division of labour, a terrain of differential group consolidation, infrequent whole coalition meetings on the one hand, and on the other, the *processes* devised to obtain the coalition's objectives --decision-making, communication (formal and informal) between individuals, groups and committees, the organising of work and so on.

This linking of process and structure is two-way. Process is what happens when individuals and groups confront structures (of their own making or not) for example: recall the activists who decided to focus their energy and resources in committees which offered some 'shelter' from what they perceived to be an 'informal hierarchy.'

Likewise, structures are adapted (strengthened, transformed, abolished etc.) in response to process: recall the activist who stated that as a result of poor communication in the coalition CoCo was 'forced to lead.' The local-international division of priority which undermined the coalition's goal of achieving a high degree of international solidarity was the consequence of a complex interweaving, over time, of structures, events, individual and group perceptions, assumptions and actions. This complex interweaving of structure and process preceded the strengthening of MOB's role in the coalition -- which merely accelerated the process of division.

### *Core Allegiances*

To speak of how the interaction of structure and process within the coalition produced the effects that it did, is to speak of the actions and interactions that took place within an isolated unit of analysis. As covered in the preceding section, the coalition members came from different sources of inspiration, had different goals and ideological outlooks. So while many of the conditions which formed the context for action came about within the confines of the coalition, this context must include the conditions which arose from the world in which the coalition itself was situated and which members brought with them. One activist described the situation of NTA in this way:

*Part of the thing was that in the coalition, the people were exposed to the left and dealt with it in a certain way which is fairly reasonable. I know that the Filipino women have very strong beliefs which is good but it can be limiting too. In a lot of the left here there is an atmosphere of pluralism but not a lot of well thought out political beliefs. So it is combining totally different experiences, moments in history, tradition, everything. That's why it's so difficult to build solidarity. In some ways it shocked me that it was as successful as it was but in some senses it didn't work, it didn't gel. The balance sheet is mixed.*

Generalisations about distinct traditions and their connection to observable or reported behaviour are hard to establish from the data.<sup>51</sup> However, as mentioned by the activist in the forgoing quote, there were strong indications in the coalition of such differences. These differences in experience, values and political points of view are subterranean forces around which issues related to structure and process form. They involve what might be called 'core allegiances' which nonetheless become inserted into the structure and process of coalition development.

An example of value orientation centred on core allegiances emerged in the area of emancipatory politics. The centre group appeared to hold to a more orthodox historical-materialist politics than the non-centre group. The scepticism voiced by members of this group regarding 'identity politics' suggests this proclivity. In reply to the criticism regarding women of colour working in the kitchen at the conference, a centre group activist remarked that, "*we have a different way of looking at the women question. These are our sisters in the kitchen, how can they (the critics) make comments without seeing the nature of the work, they are strong, they are able to contribute something, their consciousness is different --they just do it. If you look at third world women, we connect it to the larger struggle.*" Drawing inferences of difference in tradition or culture when accounting for the issues that arose in NTA is an exercise which demands caution. Nevertheless, as the last passage reveals, different traditions were at work within the coalition with regard to finding points of articulation between competing political outlooks and between third and first-world points of view.

These differences were attached to contrasting interpretations of what social movement involvement means. The centre group was committed to a politics of justice for the third world and its unequivocal stand against capitalism and imperialism. This stand provided the group with momentum in shaping and pursuing its priority of bringing a third-world perspective to the campaign. While the non-centre activists were no less committed to an anti-imperialist position, the sense of being part of a broader movement proceeding along a socialist trajectory was either not subscribed to by some, or expressed with hesitancy by others. As a result, the diffuse multiple political allegiances of the local left --infused with currents of new social movement activism-- articulated with the perspective of the centre group in some places but was set off from it in others. As we have seen in the culturally focused coalition studies (Lichterman 1995, Diaz-Veides and Chang 1996) and the RMT/culturally oriented study of Downey (1986), disarticulation among groups with different histories, ideologies and traditions is a common cause of disunity.

These studies and the present study, indicate that differing core allegiances tend to set the terrain upon which disputes occur, rather than to directly explain the behaviour of competing groups. It is the contention of this thesis that while such allegiances define the political goals and the preferred role of the organisation in meeting the goals of independent members in a coalition, the need for cooperation transforms competing agendas into an unstable foundation. Like tectonic plates these agendas collide at times but, if the coalition is successful, stay joined without too much friction. Managing the level of friction while obtaining membership preferences becomes a question of strategy for individual members. Such strategies include initiative-taking on the one hand and



negotiation and compromise on the other. Thus, while core allegiances outline membership goals and provide impetus for achieving them, organisational development and everyday interactions are largely the province of immediate and local conditions. Of course, everyday interactions are entered into and reflected upon by actors with reference to core allegiances, but unless changing circumstances directly expose conflicts between different sets of values (say at a conference), they remain 'behind the scenes' most of the time.

This does not mean to say that actors in a coalition may not speculate about the core allegiances driving other actors, and as revealed in the findings, this happened commonly in NTA. Each group explained the behaviour or tactics of the other in terms of ideologies, beliefs or organisational loyalties. While there may have been some substance to these conjectures, the evidence so far presented indicates that contingency was the dynamic propelling most acts. In fact, the act of imputing core allegiances seems to outweigh the net effect on organisational behaviour of the allegiances held by the members themselves. Members acting strategically and tactically on the basis of the real or supposed allegiances ascribed to others suggests the importance of attribution in the process of coalition development.

While core allegiances, real and purported, played a part in the divisions that occurred in NTA, activists from either side of the divisions discussed so far also held allegiances in common. There existed substantial areas of tectonic stability at the coalition's foundation. As we have seen in chapter four on collective identity, there was substantial agreement in a number of areas. There was, above all else, a convergence of

values and traditions in the revolutionary perspective and in the class interpretation of 'grassroots' action.

Also, NTA appeared to avoid other potential causes of disharmony. Having been immersed in sociological literature dealing with social inequality in Canadian society, I expected to find evidence of ethnic and gender related tensions within the coalition --particularly in a mixed population of social activists sensitive to such issues. While these tensions likely existed, after all racism and sexism are commonplace in all areas of Canadian society, organisational tensions of the kind covered so far seemed to supersede them in importance. Many of the coalition members that I talked to identified as a success the integration in the organisation of both genders, different ethnicities, and different age groupings.

That gender did not play a more prominent role in the development of the organisation is perhaps surprising given that NTA came out of the consciousness-raising Grassroots Women Discussion Group. However, there are a number of possible explanations for this. One is familiar: the lack of a forum to raise issues of difference or identity. Other possible explanations include the predominance of women in the coalition --only one quarter of the regular activists were men. With fewer men, one might speculate that there was less of a chance that conflict would arise between women and men. NTA organised a conference devoted to women's issues which served as a caucus for the expression of women's grievances ( I have no way of knowing whether any of these grievances concerned gender tensions in the coalition) and served as a signifier of the seriousness with which feminism was taken. By way of comparison APEC Alert had a more even balance of women to men in its organisation, and did not

hold a major event concerned with women's issues. As reported in chapter 4, AA women activists caucused to explore ways of challenging dominating male behaviour in meetings.

The GRWDG attracted like-minded women to its membership. Women joined the group based on a desire to explore issues such as class and globalisation not addressed in the 'mainstream' women's movement. All of the women that I interviewed spoke positively about the GRWDG. Given that there was a unanimity among its members that the GRWDG should be a springboard for NTA, one might reasonably expect that NTA's founders would establish a prominent place for women in the coalition's organisation and program. This goal was achieved --women were involved in influential positions within the coalition, a women's conference was organised, and articles concerning women appeared in the newsletter. Also, the articles demonstrated consensus on the analysis of women and imperialist globalisation. However, as the incident concerning women working in the kitchen at the PCAIG shows, and as the response of the centre group member to this criticism also shows, where other issues and loyalties (eg. first world vs. third world movements) intersect with a given perspective on the oppression of women, consensus is something that may require reworking.

Thus, while there were different core allegiances competing within the coalition this competition did not spell the end of the coalition. A coalition is built on, and its affairs managed within, a matrix of competing allegiances. Furthermore, allegiances that crossed the divisions that existed counteracted the tendency of the coalition to fracture. Nevertheless, a characteristic of politics anywhere --explaining the

antagonist's behaviour in terms of core allegiances-- occurred in NTA. These explanations entered into the stream of ongoing membership actions that were part of the NTA process.

*Differing interpretations and expectations of coalitions.*

The centre group's understanding of being connected to a universal struggle incorporated a set of strategic and tactical positions, one of which outlined the role and limitations of coalition work. According to this version, a coalition plays a particular role in advancing the wider struggle: *"coalitions are always temporary; when they end, people go back to their organisations and we build a larger coalition the next time, we cast the net wider. For us, we go back to our organisations to rebuild"* Comments made by the centre group suggest that the structure of the coalition should include a basis of unity or some other agreement that can facilitate people putting aside their differences and deal with what is inevitable: a struggle of ideas, temporary unity and struggle again. In this view there is a continuous tension between individual member goals and collective goals and out of this tension there emerges one actor with the most 'advanced' ideas which tends to dominate the coalition by providing leadership. This view is based on a competitive model. By contrast, the non-centre group tended to emphasise a balance of forces and the importance of an internal structure that would deal with differences in ways which explored and incorporated them rather than hold them in reserve for the sake of unity. Furthermore, there seemed to be a less restricted view of coalitions among some non-centre activists who regarded them as potential vehicles for broadening and deepening struggles beyond the time limitation of the

project. Consistent with this view, centre activists commented on the expectations of some activists in the coalition whose hopes seemed to exceed what, in their view, the coalition was set up to provide.

This difference in orientation to coalitions sheds light on the tensions within the coalition because it links the goals of each group to their actions. The centre group stated its goals strongly: to introduce an internationalist perspective to the lower mainland campaign that through education included the key concept of imperialism and second to define the objectives of the conference. The non-centre group's goal (though weakly stated) was to organise a local opposition to APEC as a symbol of globalisation. Each group's definition of 'coalition' fit into their respective goals. The centre group had ongoing projects centred on its community and on solidarity work in the Philippines. What suited their objectives was a temporary structure that provided an instrumental vehicle for a campaign which nonetheless engaged their core beliefs. The non-centre group on the other hand preferred a vehicle that could provide the nucleus for an on-going local base of activism opposed to the injustices caused by globalisation. A more inclusive open-ended organisation with an internal structure to facilitate the incorporation of difference would have been more consistent with this goal.

Thus, the fracture in the coalition came about due to a number of factors. These factors include the different political traditions represented by the two groups, the different political preferences which came out of these traditions, and the way in which the structure of the coalition came to be adapted to the realisation of these preferences. It also resulted from different expectations among NTA's members about the limits of coalition work. In the end, the centre group's version of coalition building became the

prevailing model. And the model, though not popular with many non-centre activists, was accepted and utilised by all of the member groups for what it could achieve. There were no public challenges to it or to some of the areas where it was weakest, an expedient unity was maintained accordingly. The advantages of this model paid off. A strong, resourceful and motivated core-group propelled the coalition. Process was kept to a minimum as it developed an intensity of work directed toward concrete goals on a well-established time-line. The emphasis on work kept the members' focus away from questions concerning the coalition's structure and thereby avoided potentially damaging disputes. As a result, NTA was successful in meeting the goals that it set out to achieve. In short, the instrumental definition of coalition served the purposes of NTA well. However, what remains in question is whether, having 'cast the net' in this way, the fish will return for the next expedition and in larger numbers. I look at this question more closely in terms of 'social movement connectivity' and social movement networks in chapter 10.

## **Part Three: Chapters 9-11.**

### **Introduction.**

Part three examines NTA at three levels, as a single organisation, as being a point of intersection for social movement networks and as being part of the APEC opposition movement. Chapter nine follows directly from the findings by examining NTA as a system and moves the discussion in a more theoretical direction. By incorporating the concepts of collective identity and structuration into a critique of the three 'sub-plots' described in chapter eight, I arrive at some tentative conclusions about the need for organisational reflexive monitoring in maintaining collective identity. One argument for meeting this need is that social movement knowledge generated within a coalition strengthens the local social movement networks into which it dissolves. I examine this proposition in chapter ten. Chapter eleven is about social movements and networks on a larger scale. In this chapter, by reviewing the literature on social movements and globalisation, I explore the question of international solidarity by identifying some of the obstacles to its achievement.

The findings identify a key problem in the evolution of the NTA coalition. This concerns the dilemma of how to conduct an externally oriented campaign as well as to maintain unity among a diverse membership. Too little focus on group solidarity threatens the survival of the organisation, while too little focus on the campaign undermines the reason for coming together in the first place. The challenge facing a resource-poor organisation such as NTA is to find a way to allocate resources to its campaign while providing some means of system integration that will monitor and act

on inter-membership tensions as they arise. Such monitoring requires a commitment by coalition members to include a reflexive component in the work of the organisation.

NTA emerged out of a reflexively oriented organisation. A women's 'consciousness-raising' group brought together individuals from a variety of political backgrounds and organisations of Vancouver's radical left. The term 'Vancouver's left' is too vague a term; the informally organised but interwoven political groupings, cultural and political activities and network of interpersonal relations out of which the women's group emerged can be considered a *social movement community* (Buechler 1990, Staggenborg 1998). As mentioned above, this community, and the GRWDG, as one of its manifestations, served as a micromobilisation context for the coalition's formation.

Consciousness-raising groups emphasise reflexivity in a transformational politics. Early experiments in women's consciousness-raising politics encountered the problem of how to combine reflexivity with political action. An excessive concern for avoiding instrumentally oriented organisational practices associated with patriarchy resulted in the political immobilisation of the movement. Freeman called this phenomenon 'the tyranny of structurelessness' (Freeman 1972). Structurelessness was not a problem in the GRWDG. Having established a commitment to develop a campaign against APEC, political action followed quickly with the founding of the coalition. However, the problem recognised by Freeman, achieving a balance between the cultural aspects of collective identity formation and the strategic aspects of collective action, became a problem within the coalition. This problem was the reverse of that which she identified in her study. In the case of NTA, collective action took



precedence over the cultural work of maintaining the organisation's collective identity. As a result, the solidary *we* constructed from the submerged networks out of which NTA arose became diluted.

So far, I have used the term collective identity in its limited definition, as the construction of a social unity that sets a movement or organisation off from other actors in its operational field. Melluci, who coined the term, employs the concept in a multidimensional form. He argues that the process of building collective identity involves the social movement negotiating three orientations: 1. the ends of actions, 2. the means to the ends and 3. the relationship to the environment (or the field in which the action takes place) (Melluci 1989: 26). Melluci states that these three components are parts of an *action system* that is 'socially constructed' in the 'submerged networks' of the social movement. The shared definition of the movement (its collective identity) is never completely stable, 'whatever unity exists should be considered the result not the starting point, a fact to be explained rather than assumed' (p.26). There will be continual tensions emerging from negotiating the interacting elements of this action system; for example, as mentioned above, tension is produced by having to maintain consistency of means and ends. There are others: short versus long term objectives, disparate interpretations of opportunities, and 'the use of resources to maximise efficacy of action or to consolidate solidarity' (p.27). This last tension was a central issue in the evolution of NTA. In an organisation with very limited tangible (material) and intangible (human ) assets (Freeman 1979), an imbalance occurred between directing these assets towards the 'submerged' cultural aspects of unity and the instrumental pursuit of political goals in the 'visible' sphere of action.

In the following chapters I will argue that the task of maintaining such a balance is particularly difficult in alliance systems organised to create a 'temporary belief space.' However, achieving such a balance is essential. Coalitions are an important component of current mobilisations against capitalist expansion since globalisation affects a broad range of sectors in nations of the North and South. As well as realising their formal objectives, such organisations can potentially strengthen the activist communities out of which they come.

## ***Chapter 9: Collective Identity, Reflexivity and the Temporary Belief Space.***

In this chapter, my goal is to distil a final version of what happened during the life of NTA and to draw some tentative conclusions about what ad hoc coalitions can do to deal with the dilemma of deciding whether to deploy scarce resources towards either political action or to member solidarity. To do this I will revisit the three 'sub-plots' of the NTA story in chapter eight; these concerned the interaction of structure and process, core allegiances, and divergent views on the role of coalitions in the 'larger movement.'

However, I will not return there immediately. First I will take a detour through the work of Melluci and Klandermans to examine in detail the concept of collective identity. I will present it as an ongoing attempt made by movements and organisations to arrive at a unified action system --an attempt that extends into the period of protest. While Melluci and Klandermans put action at the heart of collective identity formation and express this formation as being the product of a system, they do not fully explore the relationship between agency and system in the context of social movements. I will present NTA as a system and utilise the work of Giddens to make this connection. I will show that action, which is both practical and discursive, has unintended consequences. Systems require a mechanism of reflexive monitoring to deal with such consequences if they are to remain integrated. While NTA had such a mechanism, the special circumstances of the coalition's coming together, particularly the fact of differently consolidated membership groupings, made it ineffective. While there were factors unique to NTA that hampered the achievement of a unified action system, there are also factors unique to ad hoc coalitions, in general, that make the achievement of collective identity problematic. Collective identity in such organisations is

characteristically fragile due to their contingent and instrumental nature and due to the diversity of interests that they represent.

According to Melluci, collective identity construction is the precondition of strategic action. His model challenges the RMT assumption that grievances are ubiquitous and become translated into action when the political environment changes or when movement 'entrepreneurs' seize the opportunity to mobilise challenging groups into action. By contrast, he maintains that awareness of common interest among the aggrieved cannot be taken for granted and that its expression emerges from the action system of collective identity formation that produces a 'cognitive framework' (1989 p.35). This framework consists of the negotiated elements of the action system on which strategic decisions are formulated. Collective identity formed in the 'cultural laboratories' (p.60) of the submerged networks precedes action.

However, the process of collective identity development does not end when action begins. It is not confined to a latency phase prior to organised collective action. Klandermans (1992) examines the relationship between action and the development of collective identity during periods of protest, 'on the one hand, the social construction of meaning precedes collective action and determines its direction: on the other, collective action in its turn determines the process of meaning construction (Klandermans, 1992: 82). Klandermans specifies three levels of social construction during a period of protest: public discourse when collective identities undergo formation and transformation; persuasive communication during campaigns mobilised by movement organisations, opponents and countermovements, and 'consciousness-raising' during protest campaigns. According to Klandermans, the first level involves Melluci's idea of

collective identity construction in loose networks and the circulation of collective beliefs in formal and informal settings.<sup>52</sup> The second level, based on the 'framing' work of Snow et al. (1988) and on Klanderman's (1984) own work on consensus mobilisation, involves the movement's attempts to persuade potential supporters of its issue framing and viewpoint. The third level involves the impact of collective action on those participating in it. Klandermans cites the work of Fantasia (1988) and Hirsch (1990) who demonstrate that participants in episodes of action change their view of the world, sometimes building new collective identities or transforming established ones.

The point that Klandermans is making is that the social construction of protest, the configuration of established collective beliefs into action systems; happens at a number of different levels and 'takes place between groups and social categories and within social networks' (Klandermans, 1992: 93-94). He then goes on to place these levels of interaction in the 'multiorganisational field' of supportive and antagonistic sectors that he describes respectively as 'alliance or conflict systems' (p.95). I have described in some detail these systems in NTA's multiorganisational field. They included conflict systems: the government and Canadian state; alliance systems: the micromobilisation networks from which NTA members came and APEC Alert; systems that contained both elements of conflict and alliance, such as the People's Summit. NTA's internal cohesiveness was anchored in the coalition's collective identity which was constructed out of the organisation's political orientation relative to these other actors in the multiorganisational field. However, this cohesiveness became weaker during the campaign as centrifugal forces within the alliance became stronger, resulting in the core-periphery split and the divided agenda identified in the findings.

Considering the work of Melluci, Klandermans and others, I will construct a model of how this outcome evolved.

Melluci and Klandermans subscribe to the view that protest has both visible and submerged components. Underlying the visible performance of protest (for example, alternative conferences, demonstrations and media production) the process of generating meaning and strategic decision-making is hidden from view. Klandermans builds a dynamic model of how symbolic action occurs simultaneously and interactively at different levels of social movement action. Unlike Melluci who argues that collective identity building is confined to a 'latency phase' of submerged networking, Klandermans suggests that collective identity building and transformation continues into the period of overt protest. NTA was the organisational form of a collective identity developed in the submerged networks of Vancouver's radical left. A basis of unity that laid out the organisation's rules and committee structure crystallised this identity at a formal and public level. NTA's position in the multiorganisational field, its 'cognitive framework,' became part of a shared belief system submerged within the coalition.

Beyond the initial launch of the organisation, further negotiation of the collective identity became frozen by a tacit agreement among members to concentrate on achieving the organisation's instrumental objectives. Also, there was limited opportunity for consciousness-raising during the period of protest. While the processes identified by Klandermans --the diffusion of persuasive communication and the production of public discourse-- continued apace, NTA's capacity for internal reflexivity and what Eyerman and Jamison (1991) call 'cognitive praxis'<sup>53</sup> diminished with the passage of time. As a result, the alliance as a point of convergence for the

submerged networks and micromobilisation contexts of the left movement community was unable to maintain a unified action system. The variety of experiences brought by the member activists to the coalition, their ideological perspectives, organisational styles and patterns of belongingness, did not negotiate with each other to construct strong bonds of unity. To use Melluci's expression, activists did not come to 'recognise themselves in each other' (1989: 35). There was a disagreement between the centre group and members of the non-centre group about the role reflexivity should play in coalitions. The centre group strongly supported the idea that the *raison d'être* for a 'united front' type of coalition should be confined to the mutual struggle for limited instrumental objectives. Furthermore, the centre group, unlike the non-centre group(ing), already had a strong collective identity. The coalition's collective identity was not a major issue for the centre group, whereas it was for members of the non-centre group, some of whom considered that NTA could become a more permanent or broader organisation.

Setting aside for the moment the question of whether the temporary belief space of alliance politics is an appropriate venue for the inclusion of a reflexive process, I want to examine in more depth the consequences of limiting such a process. Melluci and Klandermans' social constructionist accounts of social movement action are situated at an intermediate level between the face-to-face interactions of individuals moving in loose networks and the source of their discontent in institutional and systemic structures. These accounts do not consider the part played in the development and maintenance of collective identity by internal conflict and competition in the face-to-face relations occurring in networks and organisations (Mueller 1994). In these

accounts, actions and interactions tend to be taken for granted as precursors to political strategy. They are not investigated as problematic in themselves. To understand why the problems of division and dissent occurred within the coalition, additional sociological insight is needed to understand the actions and interactions of its members. To do so I will enlist Giddens' concept of 'structuration' (1984).

At the heart of Giddens' theory of structuration is an attempt to show how social practices are reproduced across time. Giddens' motivation in undertaking this task is to find a 'middle-way' between the competing traditions of interpretive and structuralist sociology, to show how agency both creates and is at the same time constrained by structure. This theory is complex and its full explication is not required for present purposes. A brief overview will suffice. First, Giddens defines structure as 'rules and resources' -rules consisting of *codes of signification* and *normative elements*, resources as *authoritative* (coordination of activity) and *allocative* (control of material products). Seen in this way, structure both constrains and enables action. Giddens argues that social systems, defined as 'regular social practices' have 'structural properties,' and that these properties 'are both medium and outcome of the practises that they recursively organise' (Giddens, 1984: 25). This 'duality of structure' Giddens calls 'structuration' and it involves both the knowledge and action of individuals and groups who interact within a given system:

Analysing the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction. (p.25)



Vital to understanding systems and structures are the ideas of agency and action and Giddens delves into these concepts at some length. This conceptualising is most useful in understanding how NTA, figured as a system, evolved over time.

Giddens maintains that social actions flow from two types of consciousness, practical and discursive. Practical consciousness comprises the stocks of knowledge, partially situated in the unconscious, that direct the individual in how to 'go on' in habitually organised actions. 'Awareness of social rules expressed ...in practical consciousness is the very core of 'knowledgeability' which specifically characterises human agents' (Giddens p.21). While practical consciousness consists of *what* actors know in carrying out their actions, discursive consciousness is the actor's direct expression of what she does. Discursive consciousness informs the actor's rationalisation of *why* she is acting in a given way. The rationalisation of action involves the ability of agents to produce a 'theoretical understanding' of the basis for their actions. Both types of consciousness overlap, practical consciousness is very much involved in the routine day-to-day activities of the subject, interpreting and responding to her social context. Discursive consciousness provides a descriptive outline to the operation of practical consciousness.

Both types of consciousness constitute the 'reflexive monitoring' of action that is 'involved in a continuous manner with the flow of day-to-day conduct in the context of social activity' (p.xxiii). A third type of action, *motivation*, unlike rationalisation and reflexivity, is not involved in the chronicity of everyday social encounters that produce and reproduce structure. Motivation refers to what Giddens describes as 'potential for action' rather than the mode of action, and much human motivation is unconscious.

Motivated action produces overall plans and projects. Therefore, in grasping how systems are both sustained and changed over time, Giddens emphasises reflexive monitoring, rationalisation and motivation as sets of overlapping processes embedded in social contexts --with particular emphasis on the role of reflexivity or, 'the monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life' (Giddens, 1984: 3). Reflexivity happens automatically as the actor monitors his/her activities and the activities of others through practical and discursive consciousness. Reflexive monitoring also takes place within systems. Evaluating and utilising structural properties of systems accounts for the capacity of systems to self-correct and transform themselves.

Giddens argues that agency refers to the *act* of doing -not to the *outcome* of doing. The consequences of actions are both intended and unintended. Because of his interest in the long-term reproduction of systems, he pays particular attention to unintended consequences, arguing that assessing intended consequences is necessarily limited to the immediate scope of control that an agent has over his/her actions.

Having argued for the contextual and systemic aspect of actions it follows that most acts have a ripple effect that goes beyond the time and place of their occurrence. Actions affirm or deny the legitimacy of systemic rules and resources or 'circuit switches' of the context in which they take place and the result of such actions may not be that which the actor(s) intended. Giddens argues that what an agent does is separate from what she intends because intended acts have unintended consequences.

Giddens prescribes three ways of examining unintended consequences. First, by answering the question: what would have occurred subsequently if an initial act had not taken place? Second, by investigating if an end result is the unintended consequence of

an aggregate of intentional acts, and third, by studying the systemic mechanism designed to incorporate the regularised unintended consequences of agent's repetitive activities. Information on unintended consequences incorporated in this way 'influences the further conditions of action in the original context' (p.14). Giddens is careful to avoid the functionalist implications of such a mechanism by stating that it does not operate in a homeostatic way to organically self-regulate society 'in the interest of society.' Rather, such feedback loops are susceptible to selective 'information filtering' by 'strategically placed actors (who) seek to reflexively regulate the conditions of system reproduction either to keep things as they are or to change them' (p.28). Such actors exercise power in systems through their differential access to, or command of, rules and resources. Those subordinate to their power are nonetheless able to influence their superiors in what Giddens calls a 'dialectic of control' (p.16).

NTA's ability to maintain a unified collective identity that incorporated the positions and goals of its members was affected by the organisation's failure to maintain an adequate systemic capacity for self-monitoring. An ongoing evaluation of the organisation's action system did not take place and a lack of ongoing 'consciousness-raising' hampered any attempts at political and social integration of the coalition's members. While the consequences of the coalition's collective actions, guided by its initial cognitive framework, were monitored in the realm of visible action, the unintended consequences of its internal collective actions --tensions between MOB and CoCo, tensions between core and periphery, and the bifurcation of local and international priorities-- were not referred to the organisation's cognitive framework for evaluation. In other words, while there was considerable reflexive monitoring of the

external environment and of the actions of the coalition in that environment, there was little public examination of how the changing conditions of the internal environment were affecting the actions of the coalition membership. Furthermore, there was no overview of how the unintended consequences of these actions were affecting organisational unity and the achievement of a unified political program.

The point cannot be made too strongly that the unintended consequences mentioned above were the result of an 'aggregate of intentional acts' taking place within the coalition. There was no intention by any group or individual that the coalition's formal structure would play a role in the split between local and international priorities. However, there were a myriad number of decisions, practically enacted and discursively organised by groups and individuals, that led to this outcome. These agents reflexively monitored the developing internal tensions over time. The committee system, designed to coordinate decision-making, offered a solution to the emerging tensions --but not in a way that it was intended to do. The rules (basis of unity, procedural guidelines) and resources (material assets, volunteer time, committee work, leadership) became variously mobilised, resisted or rationalised in the process of maintaining the coalition and organising its work. The committee system, as part of this organisational matrix, was transformed during member interaction from its intended role of co-ordination to one of diffusing tension by focusing the work of the coalition. An unintended consequence of this transformation was the division of organisational priorities into local and international spheres.

Within the coalition (viewed as a system) reflexive monitoring occurred at the level of day-to-day action and interaction. To use Giddens' terminology, actors at this

level are operating primarily out of practical and discursive consciousness, monitoring and adjusting their actions according to the immediate tasks at hand. However, the communication loop designed to feed back the aggregate consequences of these actions to the decision-making centres within the coalition did not operate effectively. More accurately, it operated effectively for certain information such as the strategic and logistical details coming in from the coalition's field of operations. However, the unintended consequences of actions taken by actors monitoring the internal dynamics of the coalition --unintended consequences arising from perceptions of an undisclosed hierarchy, perceptions of an unreliable volunteer work force, potential ideological fracturing and so on-- did not enter the feedback loop for the coalition as a whole. Certainly, as revealed in the findings, these perceptions moved within the coalition but only in discrete units and only within the circuits of the competing interests. The unintended consequences that arose from actions taken due to these perceptions were, like the perceptions themselves, not discussed. For example, the centre group did not intend that its exercise of leadership would cause dissent among the non-centre group. However, because the centre group's leadership initiative --an intentional and motivated act to maintain continuity and focus-- was never formally declared, neither was dissent against it expressed. The result was that members of the non-centre group found ways, other than debating the centre group, to deal with the situation that they faced. These other ways --limited conjunctural confrontation, temporary deactivation-- were unintended consequences of the leadership initiative.

This brings us back to the question of why reflexively monitored internal feedback did not become used to address the unintended consequences of the

perceptions, actions and interactions of those going about the daily business of the coalition. In explaining this absence and in examining its implications, I will refer to the three 'sub-plots' of the NTA story named in chapter 8: structure and process, core allegiances, and different interpretations of coalitions.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that process is what happens when actors encounter structures and that this process creates a set of circumstances out of which issues arise. In Giddens' version, structure and process are collapsed into a single process, 'structuration.' In his 'duality of structure' concept, Giddens' more accurately includes structure as *part* of the process of action. The NTA story supports this idea because the formal structure became implicated in both the action of its members and in the consequences of their actions. The rules and resources within the coalition were variously interpreted and incorporated in the changes that took place. For example, CoCo, theoretically, should have been a key centre for receiving feedback, monitoring the direction of the coalition, and balancing the interests of all parties. Instead it became a focal point among problems afflicting the coalition. The structural features of the coalition were themselves changed to serve goals that they were not originally designed to achieve. As I have indicated, the changes that took place were unintended consequences of actions taken by all actors. However, all of the actors were not positioned equally in exerting influence over the development of the coalition.

As we have seen, due to its consolidated position, the centre group had certain advantages that did not obtain to the non-centre group activists. It was therefore strategically placed to pursue its own agenda carried forward by an instrumental interpretation of coalitions as short-term united fronts to realise limited objectives. This

is not to suggest that the centre group deliberately suppressed the operation of a feedback and reflexive monitoring system; however, such a system was not considered by the centre group to be desirable (due to the risk of causing disunity) or appropriate to the operation of a coalition, as it defined coalitions. Furthermore, according to the way NTA was set up, CoCo should have played a key role in such a system. However, because it was mandated to organise the conference, one of the centre group's primary interests, CoCo's ability to represent the overall direction of the coalition was weakened. Members of the non-centre group who attempted to debate key issues within CoCo found that they were unable to make headway. Members of the non-centre group (although not all) expressed an openness to include more discussion, evaluate political differences, and so on. However, because they were not a unified group, they were not in a position to argue for such a mechanism. Instead, most opted to minimise the chance of conflict by pursuing their interests within the system that existed, although as we have seen, most were not satisfied with this arrangement.

I have suggested that action and interaction within the internal context of the coalition is insufficient to explain the problems that arose. I suggested that differences in norms and practices attached to 'core allegiances' contributed to the tensions and divisions that occurred. The social construction of a collective identity which is capable of bringing together disparate traditions, lifeworlds and viewpoints is an awesome task at the best of times. An intense time-limited campaign in a temporary alliance does not constitute the best of times. Under such circumstances, an organisation can do little more than base its unity on political action frames that define being for or against, sympathetic to, or opposed to, other actors in the multiorganisational field.

Nevertheless, without a limited way of incorporating the diversity of normative orientations and traditions into the reflexive self-monitoring of NTA, some of its members became alienated. This lack of incorporation weakened the coalition's solidarity. Also, without clear signalling of these orientations and traditions, there was no way for competing interests to work out a truly 'co-operative differentiation' (Hathway and Mayer 1993, McAdam 1982). Without the compromise of co-operative differentiation there could be no agreement on including international and local goals in an overall project.

In NTA tensions arose over fundamental disagreements on a range of issues which can be traced back to core allegiances: allegiances to democratic practices, strict consensus versus principled decision-making; allegiances to models of international solidarity, 'victory in one country is a victory for all' versus 'act locally, think globally,' and allegiances to different models of leadership --diffused authority versus focused and so on. These allegiances flowed into the coalition from the submerged networks of the radical left, from a melange of traditions and movements: radical and socialist feminist, anarchist, socialist, environmentalist, direct action, and so on. The centre group became concerned about the potentially destabilising effect of both multiple and specific political tendencies and practices on the coalition, including the practice of 'ultra-democracy.' As mentioned in chapter two, new social movements characteristically embrace non-hierarchical decision-making and decentralised leadership. One of the key influences in the counter-cultural networks of the Vancouver left is a commitment to radical egalitarianism which includes subscribing to such themes. This observation is in line with commentators such as Magnusson (1995) and Mouffe (1988) who suggest that



a project of expanded democracy is at the heart of contemporary movements. This commitment explains, to some extent, the sensitivity shown by members of the non-centre group towards manifestations of leadership that did not fit these values. Centre group activists having moved within the same circles as non-centre group members were certainly conversant in their own practices with this ethos; however, their interpretation of the instrumental requirements of coalition work led them to embrace the tactical value of strong and expedient leadership in such conditions.

The problem of strain between the instrumental and expressive aspects of social movements has been commented on by a variety of authors (Brienes 1982, Epstein 1990, Sturgeon 1995, Kauffman 1990, Cohen 1985). If, as Melluci (1993) claims, contemporary movements are principally concerned to 'force power into the open,' the democratic discourse arising from this commitment will also act as a standard by which the internal affairs of an organisation are gauged. Thus, coming out of a social movement community where pre-figurative democratic practices of inclusiveness, expressiveness and consensus are valued, the coalition encountered difficulties finding a working model which included these means in the pursuit of its ends. Conflicting loyalties to the deployment of different democratic models were not aired within the coalition as a whole, nor were external events or the coalition's direction discussed with reference to such conflicts. As a result, such allegiances were not synthesised or incorporated into a common normative bond or a common set of priorities through reflexive monitoring.

What are the arguments for the incorporation of diverse perspectives and practices ? The work of Melluci suggests that the 'cognitive framework' underlying

collective identity is a starting place for political action. However, as Klandermans suggests, agreeing to this framework must be combined with providing a means to negotiate the tensions that arise as it becomes operationalised. Furthermore, such a framework must be combined with the creation of a space to socially integrate parties to an action system if the collective identity is to endure. Habermas (1987) argues that emancipatory politics cannot take place without communicative action to negotiate 'generalisable interests' and that such negotiation requires intersubjective evaluation of competing validity claims. He proposes a lifeworld situated 'ideal speech' situation, free of distorted systemic communication in which issues, problems and concerns can be worked out through the consensual evaluation of a claim's validity. A claim's worth is judged by its effectiveness, normative appropriateness and sincerity. These prescriptions for co-operative negotiation presuppose that a willingness to discuss differences and core allegiances becomes translated into the creation of a space to carry out communicative action. NTA had a limited forum for the exchange of ideas in its internal education program; however, this forum ceased operations mid-way through the campaign. A communicative space could potentially have become part of the mechanism for collective self-monitoring in the development of the coalition.

I will now return to the question of whether or not a short-term ad hoc coalition is an appropriate venue for such a space. As revealed in the findings, the centre group had an unambiguous conceptualisation of the limited instrumental role of coalitions in the wider arena of political conflict. Some members of the non-centre group shared the limited instrumental view of NTA; however, most of those who commented on coalitions thought that they could potentially form the nucleus of an ongoing broad-

based struggle. Thus, there was a range of expectations surrounding coalitions in general and NTA in particular. Not surprisingly, there was also variation on the viewpoint of whether or not having a program to explore differences was appropriate for the coalition.

If, as Melluci suggests, collective identity precedes strategic action, and, as Klandermans suggests, the maintenance of collective identity continues throughout a period of protest, one may ask what conditions would encourage or retard the creation of collective identity in a coalition. I will respond to this question by constructing an imaginary spectrum of solidarity, at the one end of which is an ad hoc coalition and at the other end of which is an enduring social movement community. If the traditional definition of a coalition --a temporary instrumental vehicle for maximising the resources of movement organisations-- is accepted, one might assume that a minimal collective identity, perhaps laid out in a founding document such as a basis of unity, would be sufficient for maintaining solidarity. At the other end of the collective identity spectrum one might encounter what Taylor and Whittier (1992) describe in lesbian feminist communities. In such communities collective identity is contained within reified boundaries which celebrate femaleness in a world hostile to women --boundaries that essentialise differences between women and men, and between lesbians and non-lesbians.

NTA's collective identity demonstrates that its members held to a strong sense of difference from institutions and other organisations in the multiorganisational field. This demarcation satisfies Taylor and Whittier's first of three proposed factors involved in the construction of collective identity --boundary building. The other two factors --

consciousness and negotiation-- do not fit the NTA story quite so satisfactorily.

Boundaries distinguish the 'social territory' of a group from others in the 'contested social world' (Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 111). Consciousness refers to a group's interpretive framework that 'defines and realises its members' common interests in opposition to the dominant order' (p.114). Negotiation involves an everyday symbolic display of resistance to devaluation by the dominant group. The development of consciousness and negotiated identity were not adequately achieved in NTA; the literature on coalitions suggests why this might be.

Taylor and Whittier report that the lesbian feminist community interprets the lesbian relationship as a means of undermining male domination and compulsory heterosexism. Consciousness in the movement rests on the notion that lesbian identity is political. Consciousness based on identity is as much about *being* as it is about *doing*. In a coalition that comes together for limited strategic objectives, politics is very much about doing and less about being. However, since a collective 'we' is required for action to be possible, and since action requires that the coalition represents itself as something identifiable, a degree of consciousness beyond simple boundary drawing is required. The problem is that coalitions cannot represent themselves with a collective identity built on as singular a consciousness as a lesbian feminist community can. Why is this?

Aldon Morris (1992) argues that in understanding social movements, researchers need to sensitise themselves to how overlapping forms of consciousness affect collective action. He proposes that combinations of political consciousness flow from 'interlocking systems of domination' --capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy. These

systems form a hegemonic consciousness that appears as the 'general outlook' (Gramsci 1971) embodied in the moral and intellectual leadership of dominant groups. According to Morris, counter-hegemonic or oppositional consciousness lacks the breadth or unity of hegemonic consciousness because the many groups that make up the subordinate population are affected unequally by the oppressiveness of the institutions and practices on which are inscribed the relations of ruling. Morris' analysis can be extended to the case of NTA by observing that globalisation is capital's single project made up of 'interlocking hegemonies.' It therefore affects groups differently making a unified oppositional consciousness difficult to achieve. Different orientations to globalisation most clearly illustrated by a split in NTA between a predominantly 'third world first' perspective and a 'building local community of support' perspective. Moreover, because globalisation also affects people differently according to gender, ethnicity and class, an array of oppositional consciousness is developed. At times, varieties of consciousness intersect and at other times diverge (see discussion of core allegiances chapter 8). Therefore, a unified interpretive framework of the kind mentioned by Taylor and Whittier can, at best, only be partial within a coalition organised to fight globalisation.

Similarly, because of the range of oppositional consciousness within a coalition a 'negotiated' identity can at best only be partial. In the lesbian feminist community, with its emphasise on *being* as much as on *doing*, negotiation takes the form of challenging traditional representations of women. These challenges take private and public forms --privately in women-centred activities and publicly in everyday displays such as the wearing of non-feminine clothing. A coalition, particularly one such as

NTA opposing a fairly amorphous target such as APEC or globalisation, represents a range of positions and identities which cannot converge easily in a negotiated symbol of defiance such as lifestyle. Nevertheless, its public actions were expressions of its multiple identities unified in a moment of defiance, but only in a *moment* of defiance.

Compared to coalitions, the enduring quality of an activist community allows for greater latitude in developing a cohesive consciousness and negotiated manifestations of identity. Coalitions typically contain participants from a multitude of often intersecting social movement communities. As the literature on social movement coalitions makes clear, they face the task of integrating into a working group members with different experiences of oppression, group histories, community practices, and political perspectives. This is an immensely difficult task and, as we have seen, the collective identity that emerges will be less coherent than any one of the collective identities that individual groups bring with them into the coalition. The identity is provisional and therefore inherently unstable. Incorporating such an ill-formed and unstable identity into the reflexive monitoring of the coalition's internal system becomes problematic.

An identity that relies mainly on the marking of a group's boundaries lacks the substance that is potentially supplied by individuals and groups building identity with each other in a long-term process of negotiating a self-definition. Short-term coalitions representing a diversity of interests risk destabilising their fragile unity by intensively and reflexively monitoring the perceptions, actions and interactions that arise in the course of the organisation's work. Unintended negative consequences may be easier to live with than to investigate and correct. This is particularly the case when the time and labour required to do so might be better invested in external campaign priorities.

However, too little attention paid to such monitoring also risks disunity or a divided agenda. As the findings reveal, some of NTA's members dissented from the main aspect of the coalition's collective identity which was the coalition's differentiation from other actors in the APEC opposition movement. Therefore, a tentative conclusion arising from this study is that some amount of reflexive monitoring is necessary for a coalition's system integration. The 'amount' or kind of monitoring should be determined by the resources available to institute it and by awareness of the potential that such a practice poses for highlighting irreconcilable differences.

This conclusion is concerned mainly with *system* integration. Giddens (1984) points out that systems cannot become successfully integrated without *social* integration defined as 'systemness on the level of face-to-face interaction' (Giddens, 1984: 28). Melluci (1989) points out that a collective 'we' cannot be constructed without people getting to know each other in informal ways. Hathway and Mayer (1993) state that 'solidary incentives,' such as friendships developed within the organisation, promote longevity in coalitions. Gamson (1992) states that in social movements, participants may identify themselves in part by the definitions of the group, whereas group cohesion comes from a feeling of loyalty and commitment towards other members of the group. Bettencourt (1996) found that both factors identified by Gamson were involved in sustaining volunteerism in grassroots organisations. Therefore, while an effective system is important in maintaining coalition work across time, opportunities and measures to encourage social bonding between members is also important. Many of those interviewed mentioned the friendliness that they encountered within NTA. This

factor likely offset some of the deficiencies in the coalition's system of formal integration.

## Summary

As mentioned in the findings, the centre group's definitions of the role and limits of a coalition prevailed. Most of the literature on social movements supports this finding. Diani (1992) notes that in coalitions: 'the interaction and co-ordination between different actors occurs mostly on an instrumental level, as actors try to maximise their outcomes by establishing alliances with other actors' (Diani 1992: 17). Coalitions operating in this way are not conducive to the building of a fully articulated collective identity, and what collective identity is feasible is limited and provisional. NTA came together to take advantage of an opportunity to protest imperialist globalisation and, as such, it provided a vehicle for radical groups to maximise the use of their resources by joining forces. It came out of a women's consciousness-raising group dedicated to investigating reflexively the effects of globalisation and imperialism on women. From the wrapping up of this group, which marked the beginning of NTA, to the end of the coalition's campaign, the amount of reflexive/consciousness-raising work decreased as the coalition became more focused on its visible action.

Four factors were responsible for this decrease: a) the coalition had in place a system for monitoring and correcting the internal affairs of the organisation but unique features of the coalition's coming together interfered with its functioning, b) the official structure of the coalition did not have in place a process to discuss contrasting traditions, core allegiances or ideological differences --or a means to incorporate these



variables into the direction taken by the coalition, c) the coalition's core group believed that such a process might highlight membership incompatibilities, and, for the sake of maintaining formal unity, did not support such a process, and d) the conditions under which the coalition's work occurred limited the resources available to pursue such a process. Because of these factors, membership actions taken to deal with unaddressed issues and tensions resulted in unintended consequences for both the coalition's direction as well as for its members' mutual co-operation. Because the unintended consequences of the members' actions did not become reflexively monitored within the coalition's system, a division became apparent within the coalition and its collective identity became weakened.

As shown in this study, a limited mechanism for carrying out internal reflexive monitoring tied to the monitoring of external events and evaluation of goals may be of benefit to coalitions. The limits of such a mechanism must be determined by the resources available to invest in such a mechanism and by the risk of worsening rather than resolving tensions arising from core allegiances and conflicting membership agendas. These limits need to be openly negotiated at the outset and throughout the life of the coalition. The chances of arriving at an outcome satisfactory to all members is enhanced by implementing a mechanism of reflexive system integration and by holding events aimed at increasing social integration.

The argument for such an implementation is based on the probability of increasing the political *efficacy* of the organisation. Such a measure cannot guarantee an improvement in organisational *efficiency*, if by that we mean a greater return in terms of output or productivity (although one could argue that the stronger the solidarity and

collective identity, the greater the enthusiasm for work). However, the greater the political efficacy generated within the immediate organisation, the greater the positive benefits that will accrue to the networks and communities from which the coalition evolved and into which it dissolves. In the following two chapters I will examine this proposition from two angles: first that social movement communities and networks sustain social movements throughout the cycle of protest, including during periods of movement abeyance and, second, that locally organised ad hoc coalitions are the optimal strategy of protest available to the left under present conditions of globalisation.

## ***Chapter 10: Social Movement Community, The Struggle Continues.***

Ad hoc coalitions represent a temporary intersection of different social movement networks, communities and organisations. As we have seen, NTA was no exception to this rule. In this chapter I look closely at the role played by social movement networks and communities in sustaining social movements and oppositional cultures. I argue that investing resources in maintaining organisational solidarity not only serves the interests of achieving coalition goals but also promotes solidarity in the networks from which coalitions arise and to which they return at their demise. The key concept here is 'social capital,' which Diani (1997) describes as 'ties which, while they do not necessarily imply the presence of collective identity, are however based on sentiments of mutual trust and mutual recognition' (p.130). Social capital provides the lifeblood of social movements in the long term and is a critical resource for further episodes of protest. The first part of this chapter is devoted to setting the stage for an understanding of this concept. I examine the literature on 'social movement networks' in detail. These networks form the matrix for mobilising dissent and sustaining opposition through periods of abeyance in the cycle of protest. They serve as the medium through which oppositional or 'counter' culture is diffused in creating the conditions for both fluid and linear aspects of social movement action.

The social movement organisation is not the same as the social movement itself. According to Diani's (1992) definition, organisations are part of the network of interacting individuals and groups that make up the movement. The formation of organisations marks a point in the evolution of the movement, but their emergence or

decline does not necessarily signify, respectively, the beginning or end of the movement. While organisations are part of the movement network, they also represent a node in the network infrastructure that consists of numerous micro-mobilisation contexts. These contexts provide the link between the everyday life of activists and mobilisation. They are the sites of what Klandermans (1988) calls *consensus formation*, where an 'unplanned convergence of meaning in social networks and subcultures' (Klandermans, 1988, 175) is constituted. Kriesi (1988 a), qua Melluci, claims that in these subcultures new cultural codes are drawn up to challenge dominant ones. Those who inhabit these networks are the subset of the population on which movement organisations act to spread the views of the movement. Spreading the movement's views is crucial to its success. Klandermans calls this process *consensus mobilisation*. Such mobilisation takes two forms, a long-term phase of generating *mobilisation potential*, 'the generation of a set of individuals with a predisposition to participate in a social movement,' and *action mobilisation*, which refers to the 'legitimation of concrete goals and means of action' among those committed to eliminating the cause of their grievance (p.178).

Consensus mobilisation takes place in the multiorganisational field of allies and opponents and is therefore shaped by the interactions among the various organisations in that field. These interactions present opportunities and obstacles to those agents actively involved in promoting consensus for action. Staggenborg (1988) states that rapid mobilisation does not occur simply because political opportunities present themselves to activists; '...rather, the community created by multiple movements provides organisational and tactical opportunities and attracts new constituents with its

openness.' Rucht (1996), likewise, contests the RMT notion of 'political opportunity structure' by stating that opportunity is not tied simply to the political context. While the political context is important, the cultural context is of equal significance. It resides in the 'social milieus (sic) and networks which either facilitate or restrict the forming of collective identity and the building of movement structures' (Rucht, 1996: 190). The social context is crucial in providing the foundation on which consensus mobilisation is built. The success of consensus mobilisation depends on the ability of organisers to assess, not only the political opportunities available to a movement but also the conditions prevailing within the movement's social context. This context promotes the message of 'cognitive liberation' from oppression (McAdam 1982), a message that resonates with those yet to become active.

While a movement's social and cultural context is important in the generation of protest, it is also the bedrock on which the movement sustains itself throughout the 'cycle of protest.' For example, initiator movements that arise early in a cycle of protest in response to political opportunities produce cognitive or cultural effects that influence the formation and action of later (or spin-off) movements (McAdam 1996). When a movement is in abeyance, it survives by building its own 'internal communities.' Taylor and Whittier (quoted above) identify the lesbian feminist community as the internal community of the radical feminist movement which they declare, currently, to be in the doldrums (See also Rupp and Taylor 1987). In her study of the women's movement in Bloomington Indiana, Staggenborg (1998) notes that in the doldrums, movement communities become crucial to the survival of the larger movement. During the 1980's, a time of 'negative opportunity structure' for the women's movement, she

found that activists were likely to become focused on cultural projects such as establishing bookstores, or on the building of service organisations such as rape crisis centres. Surviving movement organisations and institutional supports also played a part in maintaining connections among women activists. Thus, while many writers have pointed out the importance of pre-existing organisations and associations to social movement mobilisation (Morris 1993, McAdam 1982), of equal importance is the survival in social movement communities of vestiges of preceding movements. These vestiges provide the cognitive and material resources for new cycles of protest. For example, in her work on grassroots organisations, Woliver (1993) found that even in transitory coalitions, new knowledge and perspectives gained during the course of action helped shape future grassroots groups.

Research on movement networks suggests that behind their overt strategic and political actions, social movements are ever-changing. Transformation is precipitated both by the changing alliance/opponent multi-organisational field of campaign action and by adjustment to periods of abeyance. While movement communities and networks are the explicit formations underlying mobilisation, they are situated in a political space which can be described as 'countercultural.' Kriesi (1988b) describes contemporary movements as arising from 'countercultural' networks. Following Yinger (1982) he defines such networks as articulating a 'new cultural design' which represents an inversion of, and opposition to, historically created designs or the 'dominant culture.' (Kriesi, 1988b: 42). Kriesi suggests that these networks form the core of mobilisation potentials for various new social movements but that the dominant culture and countercultures interpenetrate at different points according to the movement concerned.

In line with this observation, Rucht (1988) states that some movements are more reliant on countercultures than others. This is determined by the 'logic' of the movement concerned: its 'guiding principle whose recognition (or empirical validity) will elicit certain structural or behavioural consequences,' including its chosen field of action or arena of conflict. For example, following Cohen's (1985) typology of expressive versus instrumental movements, the women's movement's expressive logic of identity politics is more reliant on a countercultural infrastructure than is the environmental movement. The latter employs a predominantly instrumental logic which is primarily concerned with engaging the state in obtaining favourable policy decisions. Rucht recognises the limitation of this typology by stating that even the most instrumentally oriented movements must rely on non-coercive measures to weld together their adherents and that they rely on a countercultural presence to facilitate mobilisation.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, expressive politics often takes the form of instrumentally oriented action.

This link between expressive and instrumental action at the level of countercultural infrastructure is best captured by Gusfield's (1994) distinction between fluid and linear movements. Linear movements, according to Gusfield, are similar to movements that proceed with an instrumental logic of goal orientation and which can be more readily evaluated in terms of outcome: successful or not at achieving concrete objectives. Fluid movements, on the other hand, are similar to expressive movements in that they 'imply changes in how values and realities are conceived and occur outside or in addition to organised and directed action' (Gusfield, 1994: 64). They cannot be so easily rated in terms of successful outcomes. Fluid movements operate at an everyday level where conventional interaction, say between gays/lesbians and straights, women

and men, is transformed by the construction of new identities. These identities both spur, and are reinforced by, linear movements for repealing unjust laws or invoking just ones. Thus, the significance of fluid movement is that social change which travels, at times in concert with instrumental action, and at times independently of it, may fail to achieve overt political goals. Nonetheless, fluid movements which have their genesis in countercultural networks deeply affect everyday behaviour in the lifeworld of which they are a part.

The work of the preceding authors on social movement networks leads us to understand mobilisation as a multi-dimensional model of social movements rooted in submerged countercultural networks, communities and temporary or permanent organisations. This understanding is required to account for the full range of mobilised political activity across cycles of protest. It presents a fuller picture of oppositional action than that provided by the polity member/challenger model advocated by Political Process writers in the RMT tradition. It maintains the pre-eminent characteristic of social movements identified by Diani --that they are engaged in 'political or cultural conflict.' Network theorists are able to bridge the micro-macro gap by examining the social-psychological and cultural motivations underpinning the strategic planning of activists embedded in social movement communities. Within these meso-level networks, subordinate discourse (to use Mouffe's terminology) is deconstructed in a multiplicity of antagonisms. Studying empirically the meso-level of mobilisation avoids deferring to the macro-structural bias of NSM theory which, as Scott points out, forecloses the possibility of political action in contemporary movements. By focusing on the social construction of protest it also offsets the bias of individual calculus



inherent in RMT. Investigating the relationship between consensus mobilisation and movement networks in the changing conditions of a cycle of protest, reveals that contemporary movements are, to use Melluci's phrase, 'multipolar action systems.' They are inherently linear and fluid, instrumental and expressive.

Diani's concept of *social capital* brings together many of the threads from the foregoing studies that establish the prime importance of movement networks and enlarges on Rucht's insight that opportunity structures emerge from the social context of movement organisation. Diani (1997) proposes that outcome research should be based on evaluating 'changes in the structural location of movement actors...in broader social networks,' at the meso-level, after periods of collective action (Diani: 129). The changes that Diani has in mind for assessment are the strength of ties among movement actors, the alliances actors make inside and outside of the polity in the process of action. These changes can be measured by the extent of solidarity and mutual recognition that comes into being between actors as these translate into political power and influence. Solidarity is the key component in what Diani calls social capital (I will use the term 'social movement connectivity' interchangeably with social capital), which he defines as the 'social relations through which resources circulate, and trust and norms are generated and reproduced' (p.133).

In keeping with his goal of examining the meso-level of social movement interaction, he sets out to 'reverse the causal order' whereby, rather than investigating the impact of the network on the movement, he investigates the impact of the movement on the network. Networks, he writes, are both a precondition and a product of action; social movements not only rely on activist connectivity, they create new forms of it:

According to this perspective, the central problem is no longer whether and how mobilisation campaigns, and cycles of protest determine specific changes at different levels of the political and social system. It becomes instead whether they facilitate the emergence of new networks, which in turn allow advocacy groups, citizens' organisations, action committees, and alternative intellectuals and artists to be more influential in processes of political and cultural change (p.135)

This perspective expresses the 'on-goingness' of social movements inherent in network studies and predicates success or failure on the degree to which continuity of networks, albeit in changed political and cultural forms, is achieved. This continuity can be assessed in terms of external impact, degree to which movement intellectuals or discourses have penetrated elite circles, or in terms of the impact of collective action on internal movement relations in submerged or countercultural networks. This last criterion is of most relevance to the study of ad hoc coalitions which tend to remain close to the networks out of which they emerge.

Diani suggests a number of variables that strengthen or mitigate continuity of networks following episodes of collective action. He maintains that where permanent bonds of solidarity have emerged during conflict (as opposed to temporary alliances) networks will be strengthened. Where factionalising, occurs, as happened in the Italian anti-nuclear movement of the 1970's between reform and radical wings, less robust social movement connectivity will be generated; in short, 'the type of social capital being produced varies according to the salience of political cleavages and identities' (Diani, 1997: 137). Thus, Diani hypothesises, the more that instrumental alliances, temporary coalitions of weakly compatible political camps characterise the onset of a movement, the less the capacity for developing trust and solidarity emerges. Weak

linkages can have a critical effect on both short and long-term, internal and external outcomes,

By facilitating communication and strengthening solidarity, social capital increases actor's control over their own lives. There is no reason why this general principle should not apply to social movements. To the contrary: as political challengers and/ or advocates of cultural innovation, social movements both rely crucially on previous social capital and have to be able to generate new forms of it if they want to exert a lasting influence over their social environment (p.143).

As noted, Klandermans claims that consensus mobilisation for action will be affected by the degree to which potential for mobilisation is generated. What Diani adds to this observation is that the strength of mobilisation potential, and therefore the success of consensus mobilisation, will be affected by the degree to which past collective action has managed to establish solidary linkages within the movement networks.

This insight has strong implications for the lessons learned from the NTA coalition. Division, according to Diani, has a negative impact on social movement networks and communities. Therefore, the proposal for including some form of organisational reflexive monitoring in ad hoc coalitions is strengthened. Setting aside, for the moment, the question of whether or not ad hoc coalitions are substantial enough vehicles for the building of social movement connectivity (Diani thinks not), the author's argument suggests that tensions or antagonisms left unresolved at the demise of a social movement (or social movement organisation) may produce minimal or even negative social capital. The possibility that NTA produced negative social movement connectivity is untested in the present study. However, NTA may not have promoted the production of social movement connectivity, as defined by Diani, circulating within

local activist networks. Unresolved divisions and tensions in a coalition have the potential to create permanent rifts in a social movement community. However, if as Eyerman and Jamison (1991) suggest, a social movement, read as cognitive praxis, 'is what it does and how it does it, not what its members think and why they think the ideas that they do,' the legacy of NTA may be viewed with less pessimism. Eyerman and Jamison claim that social movements are a socially constructive force in the production of new knowledge, and if this is the case, one might reasonably suppose that new knowledge containing information about what did not work would be as useful as knowledge containing information about what did work.

### Summary

Part of the legacy of SMOs includes the production of ongoing movement network integration and enrichment which in turn increases mobilisation potential for further action. However instrumental the logic of SMOs, however time-limited their existence, the extent to which the larger movement can mobilise in the future will be affected by the degree of social movement connectivity organisations can generate. If this statement is true, one successful outcome of a social movement organisation will be its ability to construct an action system which develops a strong collective identity. As discussed in chapter 9, ad hoc coalitions are at a disadvantage in being able to do this compared to long-term organisations with a homogenous membership. Nevertheless, as the case of NTA demonstrates, coalitions offer a unique opportunity to learn from the experience of working in an environment of social and political diversity. Such an opportunity is not afforded by more permanent organisations. For this reason, adopting

measures to strengthen a coalition's internal unity may pay off in terms of producing solidarity in the wider social movement context. Even if a social movement organisation is not successful in building solidarity, knowledge produced in its submerged and visible actions becomes part of a culture of opposition that is central to maintaining mobilisation potential in the wider movement. This is surely the legacy of No! To APEC.

## ***Chapter 11: The APEC opposition Movement and Global Contention.***

### **Introduction**

So far, this thesis has examined the internal workings of an ad hoc coalition and has looked at the implications of how the internal environment of social movement organisations may affect the social movement networks that they come from. In this chapter I examine NTA and the APEC opposition movement of which it was a part. To do this I return to a major issue that confronted the coalition --how to integrate local and international perspectives in an oppositional action. So far I have examined the difficulty that this task presented to the coalition in terms of organisational dynamics. In fact, the questions posed by such an exercise go a lot deeper. In this chapter I conduct a compressed survey of the main controversies surrounding the topic of globalisation and examine in detail the literature on social movements and globalisation. Following this, I revisit the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation (PCAIG) and include the People's Summit in asking whether international conferences can provide effective venues for cultivating international solidarity. More specifically, can they provide the basis for international or transnational co-operation among opposition movements? In the final part of the chapter I will look more closely at the possibilities of forming an international 'historical bloc' against corporate/imperialist globalisation. I assess what can be learned from the APEC opposition movement about the form such a convergence of popular forces might take.

## Social Movements and Globalisation.

The AELM was an international gathering. Both NTA and the PS had strong international dimensions. The AA action campaign was mainly a local student phenomenon, but the campaign leading up to the UBC protest had a strongly international flavour to it. I have so far argued the importance of networks and alliances in the building of social movements. Most social movement research is focused on political circumstances which are specific to local and national sites and/or to historical conjunctures. The literature on networks is therefore confined to the limitations of this research. This leaves the subject of international or transnational networking and social movements largely a matter of speculation. At the time of the APEC event the following question occurred to me (and I'm sure to many other activists): because the APEC process is very much part of the global restructuring of capital, how feasible is the building of an enduring international/transnational opposition to globalisation?

In attempting an answer to this question I look at the main features of globalisation and discuss, with reference to theory on social movements and globalisation, whether an international or transnational opposition is possible --or probable. Research, theoretical and empirical, suggests that there are many material, cultural and political obstacles to such a development. I refer to the NTA and PS conferences as evidence of what is suggested in the literature: establishing a crossnational/crosscultural dialogue is a complex and formidable task. However, transnational insurgency may not be dependent on such dialogue. One feature of globalisation, cultural diffusion, accelerates the transmission of information and ideas among movements in different parts of the world. The result of such transmission is

unlikely to result in a transnational movement in the near future. However, it will almost certainly encourage opposition at local sites of resistance. Most of what follows looks at the prospects for challenging imperialist globalisation as the advanced form of capitalism.

The Vancouver APEC opposition movement of 1997 was a unique event that confounds the distinction between new and old social movements. Like the 1983 B.C. Solidarity Coalition and the 1995-96 Ontario Days of Action campaign, labour and community groups came together to fight a neo-liberal agenda that threatened the interests of groups and individuals belonging to 'old' class based alignments and 'new' formations organising to promote human rights, women's, peace and environmental issues. The anti-APEC protest was somewhat different from these other insurgencies in that it was not organised to oppose a provincial neo-liberal government mandate. Rather, it was organised to oppose a federal government neo-liberal initiative. This feature brings it closer to the anti-free trade movements of 1987 (anti-Free Trade agreement) and 1990 (anti-North American Free Trade Agreement). However, while the APEC opposition organisations (by which I refer to the PS, NTA and AA) were ostensibly fighting the implementation of an Asia-Pacific free trade agreement, the arena of contest was much wider.<sup>55</sup> Arguably, the 1997 protests were aimed at the world-historical event and ruling class hegemonic project of our times: globalisation. The APEC opposition, factionalised though it was, represented a considerable array of left movements, many not formally associated with issues of political economy. Nevertheless, these movements recognised the threat to their interests posed by the globalising project of capital. The subject of globalisation has engendered a great deal



of debate in recent years. Exploring this debate in depth is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, in order to examine the role of coalitions in contemporary counter-hegemonic struggle, the following outline is offered.

According to Marxist/critical scholars, globalisation is an historical process that evolved from the late medieval period as a system of mainly economic linkages and limited cultural connections. These linkages exist between powerful core states and economically dependent peripheral and semi-peripheral states. Successive expansions of capital have established a Western dominated geo-systemic integration (Wallerstein 1974, 1982). In the current period, globalisation is marked by the decline of Fordist production (Offe 1985) and its replacement by an 'agile-production,' information-based economy (Menzies 1996). Accompanying changed production is an end to the period of class-compromise known as the Keynesian Welfare State, where social reform was built on a platform of redistributive justice exercised through the state. According to this thesis, social reform has been replaced by a regime of neo-liberal deregulation, a new defence of private property rights and the destruction of social programs. All of these measures increase the monopoly control of national economies by international capital (Teeple 1995). Lash and Urry (1987) pinpoint deconcentrated and highly mobile finance capital as responsible for a return to disorganised capitalism driven by a reconstructed market ideology. Sklair (1997), by contrast, argues that in the political realm capital is *very* organised. His 'global system theory,' maintains that transnational practices in the spheres of economics, politics, culture and ideology are constituted by transnational corporations, a transnational capitalist class and the culture-ideology of

consumerism. He likens the transnational capitalist class to a social movement for global capitalism.

As to the effects of globalisation, there are common themes among Marxist scholars. These include: the neo-imperialist commodification of labour in third world countries, the destruction of secure high wage jobs and the fragmentation of organised labour in the first world, the increased poverty and marginalisation of the world's already marginalised groups (women, indigenous and ethnic groups), and destruction of the earth's natural environment. The multiple effects of globalisation are reflected in the coalescence of different groups within the APEC opposition. These groups came together because they were concerned about the economic, environmental, political and social consequences of globalisation.

Non-Marxists focus on the development of processes that are connected to, but which cannot be reduced to, a capitalist crisis of accumulation. For example, Giddens (1990) defines globalisation in terms of the disembedding of social relations from localities into a realm of intensified international interaction characterised by the 'stretching of time and space'. Giddens refers to the current period as 'high modernity,' essential features of which are the declining grip of Western hegemony and the expansion of modern institutions worldwide. Waters (1995) rejects the Marxist position that the capitalist economy is constitutive of politics and culture. He argues instead that, in globalisation, social organisation and territoriality are linked by three types of exchange: *material*, including capital accumulation; *political*, including exchanges of support and coercion; and *symbolic* -through exchanges of cultural, educational and commercial items. According to Waters, only symbolic exchanges are truly global or

transnational; material exchanges localise, and political exchanges internationalise relations between states.

There is little consensus either among Marxists or between Marxists and non-Marxists about the extent of transnational processes which allegedly have destroyed the state's ability to prosecute national self-determination politically or economically. Three authors who challenge the loss of sovereignty thesis are Waters (1995), Mann (1997) and Meiksins Wood (1997). Waters argues that the nation-state has remained resilient to erosion of its sovereign power. In the absence of a world federalist body the state is the basic unit for addressing increasingly globalised political problems such as gross human-rights infractions, persisting economic inequalities and military threat. Furthermore, he argues, although some aspects of capitalist development are truly transnational (finance and banking exchanges) others, such as labour markets, remain predominantly localised within national territories. Likewise, Meiksins Wood points out that 85 percent of the world's industrial output is produced by domestic corporations in single domestic locales and that the majority of production is for the domestic market. While she acknowledges the transnationality of finance capital, she concludes that industrial capital is not nearly as mobile and that 'the nation-state is the main conduit through which national (or indeed multi-national) capital is inserted into the global market' (Meiksins Wood, 1997: 28). She criticises her Marxist peers who, she claims, like their neo-liberal opponents, see globalisation as an epochal 'transhistorical natural process.' She argues that any strategy of accumulation strengthens the state in certain areas and changes its role in others according to policy choices made by the capitalist class in given locations. Globalisation is business as usual. Similarly, Mann argues

against the thesis of transnational commodification, claiming that while the capitalist economy has extended its reach to all parts of the globe, it does not, as yet, constitute a universal system --it is 'undercut by the particularisms of nation states' (Mann, 1997: 489). He argues that while 'global interactive networks' are strengthening, these are frequently segmented by international tensions and that these networks are themselves 'penetrating the globe but in multiple, variable and uneven fashion' (p.495). Uneven development, according to Mann, is predicated on local conditions and international relations.

While these views differ somewhat from the epochal view of capitalist development, they are qualifications, rather than direct challenges, to the globalisation thesis. There is sufficient agreement among the various authors cited concerning: the impact of transnational finance on investment flows, the important political and economic impact on international and national affairs of transnational corporations and, the significant impact of global communication on transnational cultural definition and consumption patterns.<sup>56</sup> These authors agree that the current era demonstrates properties unique to the conditions of advanced capitalism --or as Giddens would have it to the condition of 'radical modernity.'

Given the different interpretations of the state within the process of globalisation, as might be expected the various writers express a range of views on the strategies and tactics that contemporary social movements should choose in the global context. At the centre of these diverse positions is the question of whether or not anything like interconnecting global social movements are possible, or whether the current conditions warrant only localised insurgency against the new world order.

Immanuel Wallerstein (1982, 1990), for example, argues that all social movements are by their nature oriented towards opposing different manifestations of the capitalist world system --including capitalist patriarchy, in the case of the women's movement, and racial imperialism, in the case of anti-racist movements. However, he names nationalism (particularly in the peripheral regions) and socialism (particularly in the core industrialised, highly capitalised regions) as the two major organisational forms of 'anti-systemic' historical currents of modern times. According to Wallerstein, from the mid nineteenth century onwards, these movements wore the apparel of enlightenment ideology: the inevitability of progress and human emancipation.

The paradox, according to Wallerstein, is that these movements have both undermined and strengthened world capitalism. Because both movements pursued state power, strategically they have had to ally with non-revolutionary groups to achieve it. This modified the goals of anti-systemic groups during the phase of mobilisation. Once in power, these same groups succumbed to the limitations of capitalist interstate relations: the state being a primary component of the political superstructure of the capitalist world economy. Reform improved the conditions of those represented by the movements but at the same time reinforced the existing system of historical capitalism.

At the same time, Wallerstein argues, anti-systemic movements have destabilised global capitalism by offering support to each other materially, by providing an oppositional 'collective mentality' and by providing diversionary support. Such support occurs where, 'the more a given state was preoccupied with a local anti-systemic movement, the less ability it had to be occupied with a faraway movement' (1982, p.70). Thus, in Wallerstein's view, systemic capitalism creates its own

opposition, but because of its dominance these movements of resistance are constrained to operate within national or interstate boundaries. Site-specific resistance weakens any attempt to form an adequate challenge at the level of 'world-scale process.' Wallerstein has been criticised for being both reductive and over-generalised in his world-system model and in his conception of social movements and their actions (Skocpol 1979). His theory persuasively argues that anti-systemic movements can, at best, only destabilise the goals of capitalist accumulation. They cannot abolish capitalism altogether in favour of a more egalitarian system because they are constrained by having to act within the world system.

The feasibility of mounting opposition to global capitalism is a subject of much debate. This debate is, roughly speaking, divided between two groups. There are those who suggest the impracticable or undesirable nature of such a project and there are those who acknowledge these difficulties but who take the position that transnational social movement networks are not only plausible but are already in existence. Among the first group is Alejandro Colas (1994) who could well be writing an historical examination of the obstacles, identified by Wallerstein, that face globally constructed social movements. The international socialist movement, which, he argues, operated from a 'cosmopolitan morality grounded in historical materialism' (Colas, 1994: 515), was established to confront the injustice and alienation caused by worldwide capitalism. The first international (1864-1876) did not extend its recruiting reach or issue base beyond the borders of Europe. The second international (1889-1914) remained Eurocentric but in the light of nineteenth century European imperialism acknowledged the 'combined and uneven development' of worldwide capitalism. This

acknowledgement resulted in recognising the importance of ethnic and petit-bourgeoise nationalism in fighting capitalism. With the further expansion of capitalism and under the tutelage of Lenin, the third international (1919-1943) recognised capitalism as a differentiated system which gives rise to a multitude of emancipatory forces.

Imperialism as the 'highest stage of capitalism' brought into question the Eurocentric vision of cosmopolitanism, thereby making the third international a truly global social movement.

Thus, how global a movement can become depends, to a large extent, on the development of the forces to which it is opposed. Capitalism develops at a different rate and in different ways in different parts of the globe. Resistance to its geo-specific effects is therefore polycentric. This view undermines the idealistic orientation of cosmopolitanism as a 'project which can be realised through rational and autonomous individual agency' (Colas, 1994: 523). Furthermore, as Colas points out, the second international ended in the trench warfare of Northern France proving that nationalism can decisively undermine the cosmopolitan community. Nevertheless, he concludes, the nation-state has, through history, been a force for emancipation as much as for reaction. It still has the capacity to defend the social and political rights upheld by cosmopolitans.

Leslie Sklair (1995), like Colas and Wallerstein, identifies capitalism as the driving force behind globalisation. Like Colas, Sklair argues that a realist politics demands that capitalism be confronted locally. However, unlike these authors, and like many NSM theorists, he decenters working class agency. He maintains that globalisation makes the architects of global capital less visible to workers and other subordinate groups:

The dilemma is that the only chance that people in social movements have to succeed is by disrupting the local agencies with which they come in direct contact in their daily lives, rather than the more global institutions whose interests these agencies are serving directly or, more often, indirectly, while workers are often confused about whom (which representations of capital) to oppose when their interests (conditions of labour, livelihoods) are threatened. Increasingly, as capitalism globalises, subordinate groups find difficulty in identifying their adversaries. (p.499).

Sklair builds on this observation by claiming that, not only does capital present a less visible target but its transnationality reverses the socialist principle that the goal of labour is to emancipate itself from capital. According to Sklair, globalisation allows capital to emancipate itself from labour (also see Bauman 1995). The transnational capitalist class values the subordinate classes only as targets of its consumerist ideology so that its profit-driven accumulative drive can be perpetuated. Given the relative powerlessness of the subordinate classes to access or confront the formations of global capital, Sklair borrows an idea from Piven and Cloward (1979) on social movement tactics. He argues that social movements opposing globalisation can only be effective by disrupting and subverting local (regional) formations of the transnational capitalist class: monitoring and exposing transnational corporations, challenging local business elites, opposing the development of shopping malls and so on.

Other authors who argue the impracticability of global opposition confirm that, to date, social movements have largely been confined to local forms of resistance. Castells (1983) enlarges on the theme highlighted by Calos that capitalism develops unevenly --historical processes define cultures of resistance. These processes are often specific to nations, regions, ethnic groupings etc. but are nonetheless shaped by a given



mode of production. Like Sklair, he believes that social movements have been unable to take on global capital directly on a world scale and two phenomena have resulted. The first phenomenon is the appearance of new social movements (particularly the women's movement). These have challenged capital and state domination at a more subtle level than old social movements by emphasising use value and experience over exchange value, identity and communication over state management. The second phenomenon is the appearance of urban social movements. These movements resist social domination by organising around collective consumption, cultural identity and political self-management. Castells concludes his cross-cultural study of urban movements by stating that 'when people find themselves unable to control the world, they simply shrink the world to the size of their community' (Castells, 1983: 331). He characterises such movements as essentially defensive; 'they are not agents of structural social change, but symptoms of resistance to social domination' (p.329) and as such are 'reactive utopias' (p.328).

Castells, Yazawa and Kiselyova (1995) further explore the theme of local resistance to globalisation --pointing out that resistance may, at times, take forms unsavoury to the emancipatory ethos of the left. The authors claim that 'while the new order is global, the new disorder is local, specific to each culture, level of development, and political context' (Castells, Yazawa and Kiselyova, 1995: 22). To test this claim they conduct a comparative study of three movements which explicitly organise against different aspects of globalisation: the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (EZLN or Zapitistas) of Chiapas Mexico, the American Militias, and the AUM Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) religious cult in Japan. The EZLN is portrayed as an alliance between

Maoists, liberation theologians and indigenous peoples of Southern Mexico fighting for local autonomy and against the imposition of transnational corporate rule in the form of the NAFTA. The Militias or patriot groups are characterised as a fundamentally cultural or political movement defending the local people of the United States against cosmopolitanism represented by global capitalism and the imposition of both national and international 'big government.' The AUM Shinrikyo movement, which killed 12 people with nerve gas in a Tokyo subway in 1995, is described as a religious cult which sought to pre-empt the imminent arrival of a united world government through the rebirth of spirituality and the use by its followers of advanced weapons. Its spiritual practices were based on what the authors characterise as a rebellion against the strictures and blandness of Japan's corporate society. The authors conclude that these instances of insurgency, although very different, demonstrate that,

Movements respond to the processes of social exclusion and cultural alienation currently associated with globalisation and informationalisation, by challenging the global order and affirming identity. They attempt to reconstruct cultural meaning on the basis of specific patterns of experience, either historically rooted, as in ethnic communal movements, or spiritually recreated, as in religious fundamentalism or mystical cults (p.53-54).

Thus, Castells et al. argue that current insurgency against the new world order is an expression of resistance from the marginalised. The 'marginalised' includes those who are increasingly left out of the interconnecting 'informational mode of development,' those who are living on the periphery of national economies (those from whom capital has emancipated itself) and those who resist the electronic media which operate without reference to 'historically rooted cultures.'

The forgoing accounts cast doubt on the feasibility of worldwide resistance to the forces of globalisation as these are driven by capitalism at its present stage of development. In contrast to postmodern renderings of contemporary politics which discount Marxist 'metanarratives' centering on the totalising effects of the dominant mode of production, the above authors clearly construe global capital ( particularly Western imperialist capital) as imposing its agenda on every corner of the globe --but not uniformly so. Imperialist globalisation is limited and shaped by conditions encountered wherever it penetrates. For this reason, resistance takes different forms at different times and in different places. Different 'places' may mean areas bounded by state jurisdiction (although the state increasingly plays an ambivalent role being both a promoter of globalisation and a hedge against it). Increasingly, the authors claim, resistance is shaped at a regional and often municipal or urban level. The fragmentation of resistance into localities is represented by Castells et al as both a necessarily defensive manoeuvre to protect local variation, tradition, ethnic nationalism and so on and as the only practical tactic given the array of well integrated --yet often invisible-- forces at large in the transnational arena.

In contrast to these authors, other writers point to the possibilities of developing movements on a global scale while observing the limits under which such a project is possible. These critiques, in contrast to those that uphold the continuing importance of the state and international politics in shaping the action of social movements, argue that there exists a transnational opportunity structure available for global mobilisation. Like NSM theorists, these writers emphasise the significance of unconventional and extra-state politics. Shaw (1994) for example, argues that social movements arise within civil

society. Civil society is, to a large degree, autonomous from the state; however, the boundary between state and civil society is negotiated through cultural and political struggle over time. Therefore, social movements, like other organisations and associations in civil society, cannot avoid engaging with the state as a political and coercive force; however, at an interstate level, engagement is problematic. Shaw distinguishes between what he calls interstate politics (a.k.a. international politics) and global politics. With regard to the latter, he sees social movements involved in an emerging global civil society, concerned as they are with issues that are familiar to national civil societies: human rights, the environment, minority rights, social justice. He maintains that there are increasing linkages between movements globally on these issues. He cautions that 'global civil society' is still a potential rather than a reality: nevertheless, social movements at this level can have their greatest impact; however, because social movements are under-resourced and often encounter considerable obstacles making headway within the context of the nation-state, they are least likely to be influential in the arena of interstate politics. As well, the problem of international leverage expresses the general contradiction between the modes of bottom-up and top-down politics in its most extreme form, since interstate relations have traditionally been the arena of politics most removed from popular or electoral influence' (Shaw, 1994: 655). Movements such as the peace movement which attempt to influence interstate relations are operating within a severely delimited arena, whereas 'fluid' movements, such as the women's movement, have opportunities to pursue their goals in the emerging global civil society. Shaw concludes that social movements do not occupy a unique or discrete position within civil society. Since they are embedded in many other

relationships within civil society, he suggests that a 'social movement approach' to international relations be subsumed to a 'civil society approach.'

The idea of civil society as the staging ground for an emancipatory politics is well established. For example, Areto and Cohen (1984) argue, in the Habermasian tradition, that NSMs operate to defend political space within civil society from the encroachment of state and economic steering mechanisms which threaten social solidarity. Nevertheless, while they argue that the state should devolve some of its sovereignty to civil society (and NSMs should be focusing on bringing this about), it should nonetheless retain sufficient sovereignty to signify the political unity of a given jurisdiction. Only by doing this can the state act as an administrative steering mechanism. They argue that state sovereignty is a necessary feature of worldwide political relations and, further, that a world federated state is needed. Interestingly, whereas they suggest that civil society should assume an important role in acquiring those parts of state sovereignty that are presently being devolved to corporations behind closed doors, they do not, like Shaw, suggest building a global civil society capable of monitoring and modifying the power of the proposed world state. Having recommended social movements in civil society as a counteractive force to the power of the national state, proposing no equivalent sphere of action from which to check or challenge a world state is a curious omission. However, such a sphere might reasonably be inferred from the work of these authors.

Walker (1994) contests the idea of global civil society arguing that it is too tied to conventional 'statist' politics to truly express the significance of social movements. He acknowledges that attempts to articulate the concept of a global civil society are

indicative of a need to describe a politics that goes beyond the limits of the sovereign state. However, he writes, this concept is too tied to the context of statist ideology and therefore 'expresses distinct limits on our ability to re-imagine the political under contemporary conditions' (Walker, 1994: 695). In his estimation, the whole idea of 'movement' does not fit the historically rooted notions of state and civil society; 'to be in motion is to be at odds with many of the criteria on which serious politics has come to be judged. Like rivers that cannot be stopped, social movements cannot be pinned down, cannot keep their powers in place' (p.677). He chastises his International Relations peers for being wary of theorising international or global social movements. He explains their avoidance as fear of shedding state and interstate politics because to theorise in this way may mean not being able to talk about any kind of politics at all. He does not counsel abandoning the state as a legitimate area of study. What he opposes is the idea held by many theorists that the state be read as the problem and civil society as the answer (Areto and Cohen would qualify for this indictment). Instead he takes the position that social movements must be understood as a 'politics of connection (which) is not necessarily a politics of a united front or a counter-hegemonic strategy' (p.699).

This rather vague conclusion about the nature of social movements is consistent with those theorists who subscribe to the fluid and largely cultural significance of social movements. Walker appears to deny the linear and instrumental aspects of movements, which even the most expressive agents of change exhibit when tactically advantageous. However, he inadvertently brings into focus the dilemma of agency posed by the Marxist theorists of whether or not movements are capable of building a global counter-hegemonic impetus to challenge or reverse the process of globalisation. Walker

is sceptical on this point, not because the strength or uneven development of capital forces its opposition to be fragmented, but because social movements themselves are intrinsically incapable of organising permanent enough structures to be anti-systemic or even consistently cosmopolitan. However, unlike the Marxist 'realists' he does see the possibility of social movements playing a part in world politics --although he is not clear exactly how, or in what form this might take place. Although Walker seems to be confronting Shaw's concept of a global civil society as one such form, he nonetheless appears optimistic that an unspecified global network of political-cultural exchange is possible.

What evidence is there that social movements are becoming transnational, that is, connecting and acting in concert towards achieving identifiable goals beyond the bounded sphere of interstate relations? There has been very little empirical research done in this area; however, using data from the Yearbook of International Organizations (published by the Union of International Associations) Smith (1997) reveals that there has been a doubling of what she calls 'Transnational Social Movement Organisations' (TSMOs) between 1973 and 1993. These organisations fall into 'industries' or sectors and are traditional movements for human rights, development or national self-determination, or they are NSM oriented --peace, environmental and women's rights movements. The environmental sector appears to have shown the largest increase, with a doubling of TSMOs between 1983 and 1993. Smith observes that TSMOs:

...help to define and raise issues to the political agenda, draft proposals for resolutions or legal conventions for consideration by national delegations to inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), coordinate the efforts of national social movement organisations (SMOs) to support government passage of international conventions or legislation, and

publicize and monitor states' compliance with intergovernmental agreements (p.43).

TSMOs undoubtedly show evidence that they are able to, as Smith puts it, 'play politics in global arenas' ( Smith, 1997: 56). The passage quoted suggests that, although TSMOs may be able to leap state boundaries in coordinating their actions and connect national movements to a global political process, they are nonetheless tied very closely to operating within the established circuits of power associated with states, NGOs and IGOs. This observation seems to contradict Walker's assertion that social movements cannot be assessed in terms of their capacity for conducting conventional politics of the state. In fact the passage seems to suggest that this is largely what they *are* concerned with. The validity of a challenger-polity model is difficult to determine from this evidence since from the actions cited, there is little indication as to what extent antagonism towards, or co-operation with, state and interstate institutions is involved in the actions of the movements cited. Smith's research does not indicate to what extent the connectivity of global networks and countercultures (of the kind suggested by Walker) are implicated in the creation of mobilisation potential or consensus mobilisation.

Using familiar RMT and NSM concepts, Mc Carthy (1997) comments on the mobilisation difficulties faced by global social movements operating in a global context. First, he notes that resources available for mobilisation are limited in the transnational arena, and that the type of human resources available, professional activists, rather than grassroots volunteers, will affect the mobilising structure and targets of mobilisation selected by SMOs. Second, due to diverse cultural and political settings, the ability of



social movements to come up with mobilising frames that bridge the experiences and issues important to different localities is severely constrained. The construction of collective identity also poses problems. While transnational contact between activists may be expected to increase the degree of social solidarity between different groups, it may have the opposite effect, 'reinforcing nationalist and/or subnational identities as well as activist identities..' (McCarthy, 1997: 248). Thus, not only will the availability and type of resources limit and shape transnational action, but how cultural and political contacts across borders are organised will also have an effect on the range and forms of action taken.

A study by Gabriel and Macdonald (1994) illustrates problems which arise in such contacts. The authors examine attempts to establish a dialogue between women's groups in Canada and Mexico in the campaign to oppose NAFTA. Obstacles encountered in this process included: historical differences in advances made by women in either society, the different positions occupied by Canada and Mexico in the international political economy, and contradictions in the economic status of women. These contradictions arose, not just between North and South in relation to political economy, but also among women within each society. They concluded that forging a 'feminist internationality' requires that third world women are not treated as passive victims by first world women and that points of divergence and commonality must be explored further. Spivak (1995) also contemplates the possibilities of organising transnational opposition by women to the 'new world order'. She comments on the problem of reconciling Eurocentric feminism with the conditions of third world women homeworkers resisting capitalist restructuring:

We have to face the possibility that internalized gendering by women, perceived as ethical choice, accepts exploitation as it accepts sexism in the name of a willing conviction that is how a woman is good as a woman, even ethical as a woman. How on earth are you, am I, going to say to this woman: "this is not the way to be good! Become like me! Think of yourself, not the other!" Here the limits, not only of state power, but of organizing itself are revealed. Of course, one must fight to pass laws. And of course there must be vigilance that they are implemented. But the real force of the struggle must come from the actual players contemplating the possibility that to organize against homeworking is not to stop being a good woman, a responsible woman, a real woman with husband and home, a woman. The recognition of male exploitation must be supplemented with this acknowledgement, and the only way to help bring it forth is by establishing an ethical singularity with the woman in question. This is itself a necessary supplement to a collective action to which the woman might offer resistance, passive or active. This is what a non-Eurocentric *new* social movement looks like (author's italics p.92).

This passage powerfully reveals the challenge posed to first world women activists whose experiences, based on the history of development and activism in their own societies, may lead them to assume universal prescriptions for all women. It gets to the heart of what Gabriel and Macdonald advocate in developing sensitivity to the specificity of organising in different conditions and with different histories.

The debate about the feasibility of developing transnational social movements hinges very much on the question of how the global can be configured from an array of local and often state-bound conditions. As we have seen, there are a range of views on this subject. There are substantial areas of disagreement on the questions of the role of the state. These range from Calos' view that the state is the political unit best suited to realising progressive cosmopolitanism to Shaw's, that while the state remains an important actor, constructing a global civil society hospitable to social movement mobilisation is a necessary base from which to challenge the global relations of ruling.

One step further on this range brings us to Walker who argues for reconfiguring social movement politics without reference to 'statist' ideology. Yet, empirical evidence suggests that state and interstate relations (including the UN) are central to the operation of current social movement organisations. Mann (1997) acknowledges that those movements (NSMs) most engaged in civil society and concerned with a 'soft politics' of cultural transformation are communicating in the global arena. He also correctly points out that these movements continue to look to nation-state jurisdictions to enact civil or political rights legislation (or enforce UN declarations) on behalf of their constituents. Thus we can conclude that at the present time, for the foreseeable future, and pending the creation of international and transnational movement networks, the operation of TSMOs will be limited to a series of initiatives oriented to state and interstate relations. These initiatives will be aimed at improving the interests of specific constituencies and at the policing of international agreements such as those concerning human rights (McCarthy identifies human rights as the issue most conducive to transnational framing). Paradoxically, in Wallerstein's view, such reformist measures, while destabilising the 'world-system', also strengthen it by subverting pressure for fundamental change.

The continuing centrality of the state as a political site of struggle in the international arena does not preclude the possibility of greater transnational and international linkages between social movements but the creation of such linkages by movement activists are restricted in a number of ways. First, there is scepticism, expressed by Sklair and Castells, and supported by McCarthy, that indigenous social movements do not have the resources to act on any other scale than locally against the

forces of capitalist/imperialist globalisation. Spivak, and Gabriel and Macdonald think that a transnational resistance to the global order is a worthwhile project but they caution that there exist considerable cultural and political hurdles to establishing common ground among sympathetic forces. Second, Castells (1983) and Castells, Yazawa and Kiselyova (1995) maintain that the forces of globalisation create resistance in a variety of forms, including reactionary forms, and often with regionally or state-targeted, rather than international goals. The observations forwarded by these writers suggest that locality, regional and national, will continue to exert the greatest influence on mobilisation and campaign-specificity in the future, although this does not preclude the possibility of transnational linkages forming. However, in the era of globalisation, the linkages most important to the future of social movement activity in local enclaves may not require actual contact between SMOs. Symbolic exchange might prove to be of equal importance in this regard.

The globalisation thesis, that the state-bounded steering mechanism responsible for income redistribution and capital allocation is giving way to supranational processes, is a compelling one. However, as Meiksins Wood points out,

This idea invites us to one or both of two conclusions: that in the context of globalisation, only the most particular and fragmented struggles are possible (e.g. the politics of identity), not really against capitalism but within its interstices; and/or that the only effective anti-capitalist struggles would have to be organised internationally. Either of these is tantamount to saying that no effective anti-capitalist struggle is possible at all ( Meiksins Wood, 1997: 27).

Such a choice based on epochal conceptualisations of globalisation can only lead to defeat, according to Meiksins Wood. While she states that an internationalist perspective is essential for pursuing the socialist project, like Calos, she argues that 'the main arena of organisation and struggle --in fact the main channel into international struggles-- will still have to be local and national' (p.27). This argument appears to have empirical support based on a feature of the globalisation process itself (ironically, given Meiksins Wood's scepticism about the 'globalisation as epochal' thesis). This feature is what Waters identifies as *the* key process involved in the current phase of globalisation - symbolic exchange, 'human society is globalising to the extent that human relationships and institutions can be converted from experience to information' (Waters 1995: 156). I will illustrate the important role played by information exchange in global social movement development with a study by Giugni (1998). This study claims that the diffusion of 'experience as information' overcomes the limitations to global struggle imposed by local and nationally situated mobilisation.

Giugni (1998) draws attention to three models that explain similarities in such areas as themes/issues, levels of mobilisation, strategies, organisational structures and framing among NSMs in Europe. The three models are based on 'social processes.' They are: *globalisation*, where cross-national similarities are the result of similar movement reactions to transnational opportunities; *structural affinity*, where similar national opportunity structures account for similar social movement behaviour; *diffusion*, where similarities arise as a result of embracing information by movements from cross-national flows. Giugni borrows Robertson's definition of globalisation as a process: 'the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of

the world as a whole' (Robertson, 1992). This process, he claims, is propagated within a polycentric arena of transnational organisations, events and disembedded social relations (Giddens 1992). These conditions promote structural affinity and diffusion.

Globalisation, through structural affinity, creates similar economic and political compositions among different nations --capitalism and bourgeois democracy for example. Therefore, similar political opportunity structures arise in varying locations. Diffusion takes place through direct transmission between actors but also through 'micromechanisms' of diffusion where transmitters of experience as information and adopters of information in other locales attribute similarity among themselves. According to Giugni, 'the attribution of similarity creates cultural linkages among social movement participants in different countries and allows protest repertoires to spread even in the absence of direct relational ties' ( p.99). He argues that variation in protest between nations is likely the result of cases where globalisation has not resulted in the same degree of structural affinity between nations.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, where similar political opportunity structures have not arisen, tactics and framing in one nation are unusable in another.

The significance of Giugni's work is to suggest that social movements can become transnational *without* the presence of facilitating transnational or international organisations. Extended and enhanced symbolic exchange inherent in the process of globalisation accounts for this phenomenon --undoubtedly mass media and, increasingly, informational technology, plays a role in facilitating this process. Giugni argues that the unintended consequence of local and national struggle is international and/or global struggle.

## International Solidarity: lessons from the NTA and PS conferences.

International Solidarity has been a rallying cry of socialists since Marx and Engels declared, in the communist manifesto, 'The working men have no country.' The authors then observed that bourgeois commerce and the creation of a uniform mode of production were eliminating antagonisms between peoples and nations, a process that would be enhanced by the proletarian revolution where, 'In proportion, as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will be put an end to' (Marx and Engels 1978 p.488). Later writers such as Lenin supplied a corrective to the enthusiasm shown by Marx and Engels for bourgeois commerce. He argued, empirically and theoretically, that monopoly capitalism and the dominance of finance capital perpetuates international inequality through a system of imperialism (Lenin 1983). Bourgeois commerce worldwide has increased rather than decreased inequality and therefore promoted antagonisms between and within nations. However, the hope, on the left, for a cosmopolitan unity of purpose among the subordinated in ending such antagonism has not diminished. This hope framed as 'international solidarity' has remained part of an idealised strategy since the time of Marx. This strategy is not just a sentiment. As indicated in the findings, many of the activists in NTA had experience working in third-world 'solidarity' groups. However, while these groups do useful work in supporting or publicising the cause of aggrieved groups in nations of the South, the task of building an international or transnational movement to oppose capital is outside of their mandate. Indeed, the building of such a

project has so far eluded the left. The PS and NTA included a strong international component in their programs. Can international fora such as those organised by these groups provide the impetus for achieving 'international solidarity?' In this section I will offer a limited answer to this question by examining the cases of the People's Summit and the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation.

The NTA conference encountered difficulties integrating its local and international components and, as previously covered in detail, a process internal to the organisation accounted for this. While the action and interaction of the different groups within NTA is strongly implicated in this outcome, the literature cited above testifies to the complexity of conceptualising and arriving at international, let alone transnational, social movement strategies. NTA's internal process suggests the immense challenge faced by any organisation trying to come up with a meaningful and engaging international event which can successfully explore the very real obstacles and tensions standing in the way of building a lasting international alliance. Furthermore, the political problems of designing a process which can facilitate such an objective are compounded by practical considerations: a short time span available to participants (a three day event in the case of NTA) coupled with a lack of organisational resources that makes post-conference face-to-face contacts among the participating groups unlikely. These factors act as disincentives to engage cross-nationally and cross-culturally in the ways advocated by Gabriel and Macdonald.

Can a conference be designed to overcome these disincentives? The literature covered so far suggests the persistence of locally defined issues and forms of activism in a supposedly transnational world. Although, as Giugni argues, and as Shaw and Walker



predict, globalisation brings into being the motivation and /or means of diffusing a transnational "cultural praxis," locality and nationality will, for the foreseeable future, remain the reference points for mobilisation. For a meaningful dialogue to take place among movements nationally and internationally, an examination of local and national conditions and how globalisation positions movements differently according to these criteria is essential. While the PCAIG included a useful academic analysis of globalisation and its effects on different locales, particularly within broad categories of North and South, exploring the impact of different traditions and histories of struggle on the building of cross-national/cultural resistance was not part of the agenda.

The conference was planned as a forum to exchange information about contemporary struggles occurring in various APEC member states, to develop a common analysis of imperialist globalisation and to show collective defiance towards it. The conference was not conceived as an opportunity to develop 'ethical singularities' (as suggested by Spivak) through exploring cross-cultural and political differences resulting from the relative position of states within the international political economy (as suggested by Gabriel and Macdonald). Such objectives would have been ambitious for such a short event; however, the comments of many of the non-centre activists who attended the conference revealed a dissatisfaction on these points. They observed that there was no attempt to develop a meaningful dialogue between movements from the North and South by examining differences in political tradition and struggle (see chapter 7). Not surprisingly, the conference planning reflected the dynamic in the coalition which suppressed disagreement for the sake of preserving unity. Because the conference was a public event, an outward show of unity was of the highest importance

to the organisers. This was a reasonable strategy, after all, to use Melluci's terminology, 'dominant codes' cannot be successfully challenged by disunited challengers.

Because solidarity at the conference was enacted rather than explored, non-centre members of the coalition had doubts about the substantive achievements of the PCAIG. Nevertheless, the outward show of unity was not entirely the result of the restricted time-frame or conference design --it reflected the actuality of agreement on the broad issues discussed. This agreement was possible because NTA, with its non-engagement position, represented a relatively narrow and ideologically homogenous span of the political spectrum (compared to the PS which one NTA activist accurately referred to as a 'marketplace of ideas'). Therefore, the display of unity (including a mass singing of the internationale at one event) was an authentic, if largely symbolic, portrayal of an international left consensus against global capitalism and imperialism. Furthermore, the strongly worded conference declaration against imperialism expressly stated the prevalence of different realities in fighting globalisation on Northern and Southern fronts. Therefore, the conference was both a salute to the importance of what Colas (1994) calls 'cosmopolitan morality based in historical materialism' as well as a recognition that national and local agendas will remain the focus of anti-capitalist mobilisation in the future.

International solidarity, then, was a sincere but symbolic demonstration of unity among those gathered at the PCAIG. Little controversy emerged during the course of the three days, although there were some debates about the wording of the final declaration. The contrast between the PCAIG and the PS was dramatic. At a workshop I attended on the inclusion of a 'social clause' in international trade agreements at the

PS (part of the Worker's Rights forum), which included Nancy Riche of the Canadian Labour Congress and labour activists from various APEC countries, the atmosphere was confrontational and at times heated. Friction emerged between points of view presented by supporters of the Southern perspective and those presented by moderate trade unionists from the North. This culminated in the position taken by Riche being described by an activist from Australia as 'racist' --a description that earned an angry and protracted rebuke. The workshop ended with the moderator presenting a weak declaration which did not appear to satisfy anybody. Clearly, although perspectives from different locales were being aired --they were not being 'explored.' While there was vigorous debate, it was taking place in an atmosphere far removed the Habermasian 'ideal speech' community. International solidarity, although clearly desired by the workshop moderator, was nowhere in sight.

The contrast between these two conferences is instructive. The PCAIG, was designed as a 'counter-conference and continuing resistance to the official APEC Summit Leader's Meeting' ( NTA Newsletter #8 December 1997 p.1). The PS was designed as a forum for 'civil society' groups to 'press our governments to create an open, accountable and transparent process which advances human rights, global sustainability and social justice' (People's Summit pamphlet). While the NTA conference declaration came out with an unequivocal call for the ending of APEC, the signatories to the PS issue forum 'preamble' (a final communiqué was not included in the PS proceedings) agreed to 'condemn the failure of the governments of APEC to heed the warning that the form of indiscriminate, unregulated economic growth and trade which APEC advocates delivers the opposite of people-centred development'

(People's Summit Proceedings 1997, p.15). While the PS signatories rejected the 'basic philosophy, framework and assumptions of free trade....' (Proceedings p. 15) they did not reject APEC itself. Apart from the women's conference none of the issue forums expressed an outright rejection of APEC. The ambiguous wording of the preamble is evidence of the wide array of social movement sectors and political positions (including geo-political positions) represented within the PS.

In one conference, international solidarity, derived from the universal tradition of 'workers of all countries unite,' was a foregone conclusion and celebrated as such. In the other, international solidarity was aspired to but not assumed. This contrast may reflect a difference between 'old' (class based) movement framing and 'new' (multi-issue) social movement framing --between what Rorty (1995) calls 'movement' and 'campaign' oriented organising. Rorty claims that contemporary (read post-modern) resistance to injustice, takes the form of pragmatic 'campaigns,' and has superseded the transcendent and teleological modernist 'movement,' of traditional Marxism. The holding of the PCAIG indicates that post-modernity has not entirely squeezed out those who have faith in universal emancipation. Furthermore, contra Rorty, NTA's campaign, which included conferences devoted to women and to youth, demonstrates that sectoral interests are acknowledged within 'the movement' itself. Therefore, explanations founded on old versus new movement characteristics should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of the social movement sectors was clearly differentiated into a plurality of caucuses at the PS, whereas they were not at the PCAIG.

Thus, to return to the question posed --‘can international forums provide the impetus for achieving international solidarity?’-- the answer must depend on how international solidarity is to be defined and how it is to be demonstrated. Whereas a multinational group pictured at the PCAIG with raised fists indicates a spirit of unity, this unity may not be the result of attempts to resolve problems arising from differences of history, political culture or location. Conversely, the publication of statements carefully worded so as not to offend the sensibilities of competing versions of political reality (as at the PS) does not indicate disunity. Rather, such statements suggest a compromise designed to overcome the problems created by such differences. In both instances, the limitations of conferences --the presence of different issue interests, the limited time-span compared to the time required for thorough debate-- place a pressure on conference planners to aim for a formal rather than a substantive demonstration of solidarity. Given these limitations, the benefits of political cohesion hoped for by organisers and participants should, perhaps, be more fairly judged in terms of immediate gains. Examples might be information exchange among participants and position statements to the media. These outcomes are consistent with what Melluci and Touraine regard as the knowledge -creating and symbolic actions of social movements operating in ‘complex society.’ International/transnational mobilisation initiated as a concrete expression of solidarity is too ambitious a marker of success. While international gatherings such as those organised by the APEC opposition have a role to play in transmitting ‘experience as information,’ mobilisation, as Giugni suggests, is more likely to occur through channels of passive communication. However, beyond the question of the part played by conference design in the mobilisation of protest, there

remains another more wide-reaching question: given the present conditions of economic globalisation, is the coalescence of forces into an historical bloc, of the kind envisaged by Antonio Gramsci, possible in the future at either an international or national level? I will now turn to this question.

### Globalisation and Gramsci's concept of historical bloc

Presenting the anti-APEC opposition geo-politically as both an international and local event omits the dimension of its temporality --its significance as a conjunctural event in the development of contemporary capitalism. Gramsci (1971) distinguished *conjunctural* events such as national emergencies or economic crises from the longer range *organic* movements of history which consist of relatively permanent patterns of development and stagnation in capital accumulation. He cautioned against the dangers of using conjunctural events as the basis for revolutionary action (voluntarism) but nonetheless pointed out that such events could be useful in organising an opposition to the ruling establishment. To illustrate the role played by these different movements of history, a short outline of Gramsci's theoretical work follows.

Gramsci stated that 'the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as domination and as intellectual and moral leadership ... A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise leadership before winning government power...; it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to lead as well' (Gramsci, 1971: 57-58). In other words, coercive domination (exercised through the state) is never sufficient in itself -- supremacy cannot be maintained without the deployment of cultural and ideological

resources. This type of leadership is 'hegemonic' because the ruling class acts to ensure that its point of view is adopted by the subordinate classes as the general outlook: 'the bourgeois class poses itself as an organism in continuous movement, capable of absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level' (p.260). Gramsci's political sociology suggests that the 'popular forces' must also act in a hegemonic way, challenging the rule of the leading class by waging a strategic 'war of position' in the 'trenches and permanent fortifications' constituted by 'the massive structures of the modern democracies, both as state organisations, and as complexes of associations in civil society' (p.243). Gramsci lays out a methodology for determining the most strategically advantageous way of conducting this war of position.

According to Gramsci, there are two 'movements' of history, conjunctural and organic. In studying political-economic structure Gramsci describes conjunctural phenomena as movements of history which "appear as occasional, immediate, almost accidental," whereas organic movements of history are "relatively permanent" (p. 177). The former are the stuff of day-to-day criticisms of leaders, political personalities and so on, whereas the latter 'give rise to socio-historical criticism, whose subject is wider social groupings --beyond the public figures and top leaders' (p.178). Gramsci goes on:

A crisis occurs, sometimes for decades. This exceptional duration means that incurable structural contradictions have revealed themselves (reached maturity), and that, despite this, the political forces which are making every effort to conserve and defend the existing structure itself are making every effort to cure them, within certain limits, and to overcome them. These incessant and persistent efforts (since no social formation will ever admit that it is superseded) form the terrain of the conjunctural, and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organise. These forces seek to demonstrate that the necessary and sufficient conditions already exist to make possible, and hence imperative, the accomplishment of certain historical tasks (p.178)

Canada's participation in APEC can be conceived of as part of the neo-liberal globalisation agenda. This participation can be construed as an attempt to defend restructured capitalism whose previous 'accumulation strategy,' the Keynesian Welfare State, had resulted in an incurable contradiction: simultaneous inflation and stagnation. As such, involvement in APEC forms part of the conjunctural terrain mentioned by Gramsci. This terrain provided a foundation on which opposition could form;<sup>58</sup> however, with the exception of the NTA campaign where 'socio-historical criticism' was evident, the APEC opposition, in general, did not use the leader's summit to criticise 'certain social groupings.' By this Gramsci meant fundamental censure of the ruling class and its hegemony. There were no discernible 'historical tasks' of this kind undertaken. As Carroll and Ratner point out in their study of the Solidarity coalition, (1989) conjunctural formations represent limited political advances and cannot be fully counter-hegemonic.

However, we should understand both the historical tasks Gramsci had in mind and the vehicle that he recommended for undertaking them. In the *Prison Notebooks*, his terminology is vague. The term 'historical task' is no exception. Nevertheless, we can safely construe from the context of his work that he was referring to the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling class and the development by the subordinate classes of a counter-hegemonic strategy for accomplishing this goal. In his exegesis on political power, Gramsci determines that the 'demonstration of necessary and sufficient conditions,' which includes bringing ideological, philosophical and political persuasiveness to bear on the enemy, can only be achieved by the creation of an



'historical bloc' (also called a an 'ideological' or 'social bloc' at different times in the text). Gramsci's revolutionary prescription was for the formation of a 'historical bloc' of popular forces given content by their relationship to the material structure of capitalist society and form by operating within the superstructure (p.377). Gramsci claims that the 'structures and superstructures' form an 'historical bloc.' That is to say, 'the complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production' (Gramsci p.366). The linking of structure and superstructure in this way is made possible through a revolutionary praxis created when, at a historical conjuncture, popular movements are able to undertake two tasks: create a unity of ideology (pp.328, and 377) and establish the reciprocal unity of intellectual understanding (leaders) and popular feelings (masses) (p.418). Clearly, Gramsci envisaged the incorporation of a variety of popular anti-establishment movements, including nationalist movements, operating largely within civil society into a momentous 'bloc' of solidary consciousness and action. He was *not*, as Boggs (1973: 81) points out, talking about 'simple alliances, coalitions, or loose configurations of political groups.' Thus, while the APEC opposition movement was certainly a coalescence of popular movements, it remained a conjunctural phenomenon and never approached the scale of organic significance or mobilisation required of an historical bloc. The very fact that there were three quite distinct organisations within the overall opposition attests to this fact.

Including a Marxist analysis such as Gramsci's is a necessary adjunct to NSM and RM theories because it is capable of supplying a theoretical and historical framework to the profile of the APEC opposition movement which the other theories

fall short of being able to do. While participants were drawn from a variety of social movements, often movements with particularistic interests, they nonetheless came together in opposition to capital --or in opposition to specific aspects of capital's globalisation project. RMT does not contribute any way of understanding mobilisation in terms of the historical development of capitalism and NSM theory tends to focus on the cultural and psychological aspects of mobilisation. Unlike RMT, and like the Marxist perspective, NSM theory does provide a critical macro-theory of history, but relegates the class-related dynamic of mobilisation to the designation of being an 'old' social movement phenomenon. That 'new' social movements participated in the APEC opposition raises questions about political differences between old and new movements. While the political discourses of the APEC opposition 'new' social movements<sup>59</sup> were not explicitly socialist, they included political-economic analysis in full measure. The inclusion of such analysis in the various group's manifestos indicates a blurring of the distinction between new and old social movements and admits the political-economy of Marxism into the field of contending theories --even if only NTA, among the three organisations, was close to having an explicit 'class-perspective.'

Given the participation of different movements in the APEC opposition, does this conjunctural event therefore signify an embryonic historic bloc --or perhaps even a transnational historic bloc? Carroll and Ratner (1994) argue that by viewing the cultural practices of new social movements as situated within civil society and therefore opposed to the reproduction of economic and social inequality inherent to capitalist society, they can be interpreted as counter-hegemonic. To back up this assertion, they quote Melluci's contention that a social movement can be understood to 'the extent to

which its actions challenge or break the limits of social relations' (Melluci 1989, p.161). A Gramscian political economy can incorporate the moral and psychological insights of NSM theory without deferring to the heterogeneous fragmentation of agency common to 'post-Marxists' such as Laclau and Mouffe. Carroll and Ratner argue that while Gramsci clearly perceived revolutionary activity to be class centred, his conception of the 'historic bloc' was broad enough to include an array of popular-democratic forces. Furthermore, they add that, even if social movements have different agendas, the totalising dynamic of capitalism<sup>60</sup> suggests that counter-hegemonic coalition formation may be possible. This format could feasibly be adopted under the rubric of anti-capitalism if not within a specifically working-class oriented politics of socialism. Carroll and Ratner think that with a project that includes the multiple demands of contemporary movements, an historical bloc unified in a continuous 'war of position' against capital may be possible. While anything like the 'historical bloc' envisaged by Gramsci appears but a dim hope on the horizon, recent events show that opposition to globalisation is a cause that attracts diverse issue-related movements and political formations. While there are immense difficulties to be overcome, imperialist globalisation offers an unprecedented opportunity to bring together the 'popular forces' of our present times. What factors weigh in favour of, or against, such an outcome? I will comment on the quandaries that beset those in favour of constructing such a vehicle for mobilisation.

First, the practical, philosophical and political obstacles to forming a single movement of solidary consciousness and action are imposing. Perhaps the most important challenge is conceptualising the site at which contemporary popular forces

can converge. Due to its relationship to the state and economic structure nationally defined, Gramsci specified civil society as a location for mounting counter-hegemonic struggle. Therefore, given the elusiveness of anything like a 'global civil society,' transposing his analysis to the international or transnational arena remains problematic. What, or where, is the superstructure that corresponds to the structure of transnational capital --itself in a period of transformation? Building transnational non-governmental, non-state sanctioned and grassroots based structures and alignments that *do not* reflect the priorities of capital must be a primary objective for the left. Such initiatives are rudimentary at the present time.

Second, as the APEC opposition demonstrates, there are considerable rifts within the left. The main one appears to be the most traditional: that between reformist and revolutionary groupings. The issue of globalisation, given its approximation to the dynamic development of capitalism, resurrects many of the unresolved fractures between those in favour of demanding concessions from the system versus those demanding emancipation from it. Other fractures evident within the APEC opposition movement include differences over tactics, for example, between legal and illegal means of protest, between direct action and conventional political action. Also, programmatic and ideological incompatibilities remain between different issue-related movements.

Third, state repression has increased while tolerance for dissent has decreased, making mobilisation costly (Tilly 1978). Repression makes 'cognitive liberation' and the building of an historical bloc problematic. The decline of the Keynesian welfare state has ushered in the 'authoritarian state' (Poulantzas 1978) whose emphasis on

surveillance, minimal democracy and law and order (Hall et al 1978) is a response to the decline of ruling class hegemony once underwritten by the KWS. The strengthening of the state's coercive armour is intended to make national territories safe for transnational investment (Teeple 1995). The protesters at UBC discovered this evolutionary stage of the Canadian state first hand. More recently, activists protesting the World Trade Organisation meeting in Seattle (19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 1999) discovered in hails of rubber bullets, clouds of tear gas and pepper spray, the American state's willingness to suppress dissent.

These problems are not insuperable and as the 'Battle of Seattle' demonstrates, there is cause for optimism. Despite the practical and political difficulties of conceiving and building transnational structures and alignments, transnational connectivity is possible both through the passive form of diffusion (access to electronic-mail and the worldwide web represents a reasonably inexpensive means of such diffusion) and through ongoing limited contacts between progressive forces in different nations. Cultural diffusion was one of the most important opportunities offered by the APEC opposition movement. Furthermore, the experience of the APEC opposition gives some encouragement to the possibility that different movement sectors can work together --even if this was only demonstrated on a temporary basis. Events in Seattle where 50,000 trade unionists and social movement activists from all sectors marched in protest to the meeting of the World Trade Organisation minister's conference suggest that organising against globalisation may not be so temporary after all. This protest seems to have built on the APEC protests --many Canadians (including twenty three buses sponsored by B.C. trade unions) took part in actions, including mass civil

disobedience. While the Seattle protests provide further evidence that calls into question the distinction between 'old' and 'new' social movements, substantial hurdles remain in bringing together, intellectually and strategically, the different perspectives and interests represented within the progressive movement. For historical bloc formation in the long term, a means of synthesising the multiple counter-hegemonies alluded to by Morris (1992) into a cohesive opposition movement remains a major challenge for the left. Any move towards forming a 'historical bloc' must include open debate about different forms and levels of political engagement with the powers that be and tactical discussion about confronting state repression and suppression of dissent. On a transnational basis, this discussion must take into account the similarities and dissimilarities of political structures, cultures and methods of repression and suppression in different regions.

## Summary

The APEC opposition movement came into being to protest the APEC leader's meeting, an event which, for many of those involved in the movement, symbolised a ceremonial endorsement of globalisation. While those who protested did so for different reasons --evidence of this can be read from the array of issue-related groups involved-- they were united in one belief. This belief can be summed up in the following way: the neo-liberal free-market agenda is destructive to the biosphere and to the interests of those least able to defend themselves from its exploitation and its marginalisation. The abuse of human rights was an issue of major importance to those

organising the protest, particularly organisers for the People's Summit and APEC Alert. This aspect of the protest was no less concerned with challenging the dominant codes of globalisation. These organisations pointed out that APEC not only does not protect or promote respect for human and civil rights but that it imperils these rights by intensifying the commodification of labour. Melluci's observation about the democratic agenda of contemporary movements, 'collective mobilisation forces power into the open and exposes the interests behind the apparent neutrality of its rationality' (Melluci, 1994: 185) could have been written especially for this opposition movement. APEC, a blatantly undemocratic organisation of the Asia-Pacific ruling classes, spurred people with various perspectives, interests and issues into action. However, this action was not carried out by a solid phalanx of resistance, or even by a 'united front.'

The APEC opposition as a whole, was emblematic of the various distinctive currents and debates within the contemporary left, both internationally, nationally and locally. These currents and debates are ideological and programmatic, encompassing tensions between revolutionary and reformist factions, direct action and conventional forms of protest, engagement and non-engagement positions, perspectives of North and South. Although the event was successful in bringing into dialogue some of these perspectives and currents, there remained rifts where no dialogue occurred. And, as is clear from the PS, where dialogue did occur, rifts were not healed sufficiently to arrive at a consensus regarding engagement with APEC.

In this chapter I have examined some of the reasons why holding such dialogue is problematic in the present phase of globalisation. Although capitalism is 'totalising,' its development is uneven; geographical areas, social groups and cultures are affected

differently by its advance. There exist different reasons for, and manifestations of, resistance to globalisation. Consequently, many of these insurgencies are incompatible and where they are compatible, there are cultural and political lacunae to be overcome in ensuring the comprehensibility of such a project.

The evolution of the NTA coalition bore the mark of some of these tensions. The lack of fit between local and internationalist orientations at the PCAIG resulted from conditions within the coalition, particularly the relationship between the consolidated centre group and the other less organised groups and individuals. The centre group, with its core allegiance to third world liberation, promoted a strong third-world perspective at the conference. Setting the conference agenda was one of the centre group's main reasons for participating in the coalition and it succeeded in this goal. The centre group, through the Research Education and Media committee, was also very active in building networks of support locally; however, the visible action which paralleled the conference --the march and rally-- was largely organised by those segments of the coalition intent on highlighting the connection between local issues and globalisation. Imperialism, the key concept that brought these two areas of program priority together was sufficient to create a strong symbol around which those who attended the conference and the march could join in solidarity. However, this solidarity was not built on a thorough investigation of the uneven development of global capitalism and the relationship among different sites of resistance to its expansion.

International solidarity as an outward representation of unity is an important statement in the context of political confrontation where conflicting statements grapple in a war of position. The main organisations opposing APEC were primarily motivated



to provide a parallel or alternative presence to the AELM; therefore, reaching some kind of accord was of importance when challenged to match the APEC leader's slick public relations exercises made possible by government and corporate funding. The NTA coalition, representing a narrower segment of the left political spectrum, was able to reach unity more readily than the PS which represented political and ideological groupings from moderate to radical. As a result there was a great deal more debate occurring at the PS but whether this debate led to the establishment of common ground between movements, often geo-politically differentiated, is questionable. Given the constricted time-frame under which they operate, international conferences may not provide much opportunity to share perspectives beyond the airing of traditional divisions. Under these conditions divisions become entrenched and their exposure does not provide the basis for facilitating working relationships among participants. Therefore, designing a conference to minimise debate and emphasise outward unity would appear to make sense. However, this strategy, concerned with the symbolic aspects of solidarity, does not establish the means for building lasting co-operative projects any more than does the 'market-place of ideas' design.

Given the limitations on constructing comprehensive protest, the APEC opposition movement was, nonetheless, a success. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the opposition was to provide a site for different movements to visibly protest APEC. Both the PS and NTA held colourful and militant demonstrations in addition to gaining media coverage of their conferences. Of particular note in this regard was the action of APEC Alert, an organisation that combined education and tactics of confrontation in its campaign. In common with NTA and the PS, its goal was to expose the anti-democratic

APEC agenda; however, its direct action tactics also made transparent the Canadian government's denial of the constitutional right to protest and its willingness to exercise state control for the comfort and convenience of undemocratic regime leaders attending the AELM (Ericson, and Doyle, 1999). A second achievement of the APEC opposition was to provide an opportunity to educate activists and the public on APEC and globalisation. Although conferences are limited in their capacity to build and sustain international co-operation, they nonetheless provide venues for the exchange of information about the immediate impact of globalisation in different parts of the world, promoting cultural diffusion and the recognition of structural affinity among participants. Amongst activists, conferences provide an opportunity for the sharing of protest repertoires.

As with all instances of social movement mobilisation, the APEC opposition provided the opportunity to produce social movement connectivity and the residue of cognitive praxis for local social movement networks; however, given the fragmented nature of the opposition, any positive gains of this kind would likely be restricted to the circuits of discrete sectors and communities. While the geo-political specificities, ideological divisions, styles of protest, and range of issue-orientations represented within the APEC opposition did not suggest the imminent formation of an 'historical bloc,' the recent protest in Seattle suggests the further development of links between multiple social movements and their organisations. In their capacity for bringing together activists representing all causes into one cause, both events proved that conjunctural counter-hegemonic action on the question of economic globalisation is both possible and worthwhile.

## **Chapter 12: Conclusions.**

This study highlights the importance of maintaining an effective *action system* in developing a social movement's collective identity. An effective action system devises a method of working out the internal tensions that arise in the course of mobilisation. The more effective the action system the greater will be the social movement connectivity generated among the submerged networks and countercultures which nurture social movements and their organisations. These networks are of crucial importance in maintaining social movements through periods of protest abeyance and keeping alive mobilisation potential when there is an upswing in the protest cycle. The opposition to APEC marks a limited and localised example of such an upswing. The APEC opposition movement was a conjunctural phenomenon where a temporary consolidation of movements from North and South opposing the implementation of a free trade agreement protested the APEC leader's summit. The NTA and PS conferences reflected some of the problems, indicated in the literature, of initiating a permanent international or transnational opposition to globalisation. This experience highlights the importance of investing resources in maintaining local movement networks while exploring ways to construct meaningful transnational dialogues, particularly between movements of North and South. At the present time, building a transnational network within which to carry on this dialogue is in its infancy. In the main, counter-hegemonic movements are confined to operating at the local and national levels. However, investment of resources by activists and organisations in local

countercultural networks may pay off in the long run by finding a point of convergence among the many interests potentially capable of founding an historical bloc.

Collective identity is about the social construction of a strategic cognitive framework. During a period of protest it is the search for common interests, a continuously negotiated arrangement which addresses means, ends, and ongoing tensions which may threaten the solidarity of the movement or movement organisation. The present study indicates that such an action system requires a mechanism for reflexively monitoring these tensions. This requirement is particularly the case in coalitions where collective identity is made unstable by limited organisational opportunities for building collective consciousness and for generating outwardly negotiated cultural ensignia. Reflexive monitoring is essential for collective identity as action proceeds. The actions of social movements have both submerged and visible aspects. Without effective reflexive monitoring of external and internal events and the relationship between the two, undue resources diverted either to submerged or to visible actions may result in an imbalance between the need for solidarity versus the need for realising instrumental objectives. A challenge for social movements, and coalitions in particular, entails balancing the need for resources to maintain solidarity with the need for resources to conduct an intense campaign of action.

However temporary a coalition might be, a space where some degree of expression, evaluation and/or restating of the SMOs generalised beliefs (and the goals that emerge from it) is needed. Such a space is required in order to enhance co-operative differentiation within the coalition. This means incorporating members' core allegiances and political orientations into a common agenda while recognising that

member groups, responding to their constituencies, may value some parts of the agenda more than others. The formal structure of the organisation (its rules and resources) should contain a mechanism for dealing with disputes arising from difference. The structure itself needs to be reflexively monitored to evaluate its success in realising the coalition's common agenda, so that it, or the agenda, or both, can be examined in the light of internal dynamics, external events and campaign goals. To use Giddens' theoretical language, SMOs are 'systems grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw on rules and resources' (towards meeting political objectives). Actors and structures share a relationship. Activists can change SMO structures and, as well, their actions are determined by these same structures. Providing a space for monitoring the consequences, intended and unintended, of this relationship, as well as those that result from the actions and interactions of SMO members on a daily basis is imperative for maintaining system integration. System integration combined with initiatives to promote social integration are necessary for coalition solidarity.

In the case of NTA certain issues threatened to undermine solidarity, the more so because there was not an adequate mechanism in place to debate or resolve them. While the results of this small study can only be generalised to a limited extent, certain conclusions peculiar to NTA may have some instructive value for future coalition formation. First, coalition members need to adopt a model of leadership which all can live with. This requires finding a means of reconciling respect for norms of radical egalitarianism, commonly adhered to in left circles, with an agreed-to means of directing and coordinating the affairs of the organisation. Second, there needs to be a public acknowledgement that some members might have greater resources than others,

be positioned more strategically than others, or might have greater influence than others. Agreement should be sought to minimise the effects of differential membership strength --for example ensuring that leadership/administrative tasks are shared equally by different groups. Third, a common agenda should be adopted that nonetheless acknowledges the weighting given to coalition goals by different members. Some members or groups may prioritise certain goals over others. This prioritising is inevitable because members have different core allegiances and represent different constituencies. If not publicly stated at the outset, such prioritising can lead to unnecessary competition and a weakening of the common agenda. Involvement by groups in each other's priority areas may lessen competition for resources or political ascendancy.

Issues concerning leadership, disproportionate consolidation and goal prioritising can become manageable if individuals have the will and capacity to deal with them. This means reflexively monitoring the consequences (nearly always of the unintended kind) of its members' actions as they encounter the problems underlying such issues. However, there is always risk attached to venturing into areas such as leadership: they can quickly become controversial with the result that division becomes exacerbated not overcome. Certain critical variables need to be taken into consideration when creating space for debate: the availability of resources, the predicted length of the campaign, the consequences of not addressing issues. If, in contemplating coalition formation, issues and disparities such as the ones cited above seem to present insurmountable obstacles, coalition formation itself may not be feasible. If coalition formation *is* feasible, the organisation should look for ways to achieve 'co-operative

differentiation' among its members. As Hathway and Meyer (1993) suggest, this requires a means of dealing with disputes through compromise based on agreement or alternatively, agreement to disagree.

In discussing collective identity, Melluci (1989) assumes the existence of a social movement action system as a precursor to action. Social movement organisations cannot take such systems for granted. On the contrary, they need to consciously establish action systems and the structures that sustain them. Once established, such structures need to be continually evaluated as to how well they facilitate the operation of the action system. Not all action systems are born equal however --ad hoc coalitions characteristically can only muster a partial and unstable collective identity, making the action system more difficult to establish and maintain. Therefore, the temptation might be to rely on a written basis of unity and functional structure as minimal requirements for such a system, avoiding any ongoing monitoring of internal dynamics.

However, as I have argued, how well the action system operates depends largely on how consciously it is adopted and how its operation is supported. This issue comes down to a question of political efficacy versus organisational efficiency. NTA was undoubtedly an efficient organisation, achieving major objectives with its deployment of limited resources. The tendency of coalitions is to maximise output with the least amount of work possible and the fewest resources available. However, there is an equally great need to evaluate the importance of political efficacy as an outcome of coalition formation. This need can be met by developing an awareness of the role played by coalitions in producing 'social movement connectivity'. Social movement connectivity, the forming of enduring social bonds that facilitate the passage of

resources and the production of trust and norms provides the foundation for struggles against societal structures of domination. Social movements also develop 'cognitive praxis,' or political and organisational know-how that is passed on to succeeding movements and to other areas of society. Many members of NTA remarked on how much they had learned about local activism, and activism in general, from the experience of being part of the NTA campaign. Therefore, the production of social movement connectivity is not the only hoped-for outcome of coalition work; knowledge gained during the coalition's work is an equally valuable asset --although, its distribution will likely be enhanced by the existence of solidary bonds.

Ad hoc coalitions arise from, and return to, the submerged networks, countercultures, and fluid movements of everyday politics. In fact they can, adapting Gusfield's terminology, be regarded as movements of temporary linearity. For this reason they are, unlike more permanent organisations, closer to the networks that bring them into being. Such networks are of vital importance in sustaining social movements throughout the cycle of protest --and they are particularly important in helping to ensure their survival during the doldrum periods of activism. Interaction within networks creates social movement connectivity which is translated into mobilisation potential and into consensus mobilisation when there is an upswing in the cycle of protest. Coalitions have a role in the production of social movement connectivity within these networks. Even though coalitions come together to maximise the use of resources for ostensibly instrumental purposes, their success in maintaining solidarity during the course of the political campaign will have favourable repercussions for the long-term health of the social movement community.



Diani, (1992) claims that coalitions are not conducive to the construction of collective identities and Diani (1997) claims that their instrumentality pre-empts the establishment of permanent bonds among movement activists. As we have seen, in all probability coalitions such as NTA are only able to construct a limited collective identity --one which is fragile and yet serves the needs of the organisation. NTA was able, based on its self-definition in the multiorganisational field to build a sustainable collective identity; this finding calls into question the force of Diani's assertion regarding coalitions and collective identity. His second claim that coalitions do not produce much in the way of social movement connectivity such as mutual trust, new bonds and solidarities, may, in the case of NTA, appear to be on firmer ground. As we have seen, unity in NTA was often provisional and subject to stress as divisions developed. If Diani is correct, such divisions reduce the potential for creating solidary bonds that survive the social movement's demise. However, the evidence for NTA producing minimal or negative social capital is only suggestive. Given the limitation of the present study in researching solidarity as an outcome, any such conclusion cannot be asserted with confidence.

The extent to which the concept of social capital can be applied to the building of international solidarity, or to the building of transnational social movements, remains guarded at the present time. Social movement networks on this scale are rudimentary and transnational social movement organisations that do exist are confined to largely instrumental interaction with bodies such as the UN or to the arena of interstate 'hard' politics. Social movements used to mobilising within the context of nationally defined civil societies do not, at present, have an equivalent transnational associational structure

on which to base their opposition. However, two social processes of globalisation, cultural diffusion and structural affinity, tend to create political opportunities, organisational forms and patterns of mobilisation which are similar across international boundaries. Cultural diffusion, in particular, favours the spread of 'soft politics' such as those forming the core of identity-based movements (Mann 1997) and as a result there exists potential for the building of some form of global connectivity.

Nevertheless, any such connectivity will be modified by the tendency of globalisation to form 'polycentric sites of resistance.' Capitalism develops unevenly as the result of local variation. Individual or combined aspects of capitalist expansion, financial flows, restructured labour markets, changing methods of production and so on, affect national and local areas differently. This comes about as a result of the international division of labour and the logic of the world-system (Wallerstein's core-periphery relationship). Locally and nationally, historical, political, economic and cultural factors affect the pattern of capital-imperialist penetration and influence the forms that opposition to its penetration takes. There is substantial disagreement between Marxist and non-Marxist commentators as to whether the mode of production provides a key to understanding the specificity of local resistance. However, in the writer's view, and in the spirit of what motivated the different movement sectors in the APEC opposition, there is little doubt that the current phase of capitalist expansion further marginalises peripheral and oppressed groups. This effect will be seen increasingly as more of the world becomes drawn into the circuits of capitalist accumulation.

While daunting in the scale and speed with which this process seems to be taking place, imperialist globalisation opens up opportunities for concerted resistance. Writers in the NSM school characterise current movements as non-class related, representing issues that signify a multiplicity of social divisions and protection of the earth's biosphere. However, as opposition to APEC and the WTO indicates, globalisation touches all aspects of society and offers social movements, whose primary issues include racism, militarism, patriarchy and ecological destruction, a common framework of social justice based on a system whose 'bottom line' is the creation of economic inequality (otherwise known as class). Although the same divisions seen at APEC were apparent during the Seattle campaign, a common purpose summed up in the slogan 'Stop the WTO' was subscribed to by all organisations and factions. At Seattle, expressive and conventional modes of protest co-existed in the same march, although there was clearly a dividing line between those willing to use civil disobedience as a tactic and those not willing to do so. While there is no sign that an international or transnational proletarian movement will arise to defeat economic/imperialist globalisation in the near future, organisations dedicated to working class interests and those representing 'new social movements' appear to have found that they are fighting the same structures of domination. The forces that have gathered to defeat the institutional building blocks of the process (APEC, MAI, WTO) indicate a commitment to work together in 'co-operative differentiation.' This work includes moving towards a common analysis and, increasingly, common strategies.

Despite the increased potential for broad movement formation, resistance to transnational capital will likely remain national, local and defensive. This is not to

suggest that such action need be insular --in fact the labour movement and many NSMs hold to a cosmopolitan ethos embodied in the 'think globally, act locally' principle. There is a distinct impulse in such movements to connect internationally and transnationally, despite an array of practical and political obstacles to doing so. With regard to the latter, the construction of enduring networks requires the initiation of communicative space to explore the histories of subjugation and resistance of those in different locales. Such an initiative would include an ongoing analysis of how globalisation situates social groupings, states and regions differently. Establishing such communication, which bridges local and international barriers, is no easy task as the experience of the NTA and PS conferences makes clear.

The APEC opposition did not form the basis for an historical bloc and the appearance of such movement consolidation is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Does this confirm Melluci's (1989) characterisation of contemporary movements as ephemeral, with 'no program and no future,' and activists as individualistic 'nomads who dwell within the present'? There is no clear answer to this question. On the one hand the traditional program of cosmopolitanism is in doubt given the specificity of sectoral interests represented in the opposition; on the other hand, this representation does not conform to Melluci's claim that contemporary movements are evidence that the 'right to difference replaces the right to equality.' If anything, the APEC opposition demonstrates that difference and equality are connected. APEC and other manifestations of globalisation jeopardise gains of social and economic equality made by subordinate groups.

Does imperialist globalisation, then, provide a 'foundational' premise for galvanising opposition in the spirit of the traditional worker's movement? While Marxism has supplied social movements with an effective political vision of historical inevitability and an emancipatory agent capable of overcoming social inequality, the socialist project clearly needs to redefine itself if it is to appeal to those for whom identity and a politics of recognition are of greatest importance. This means including the perspectives of women, people of colour, gays and lesbians and so on. 'Including' means more than 'adding-on' --it means class politics as understood by these groups; as an NTA activist put it, *'a universalising politics rather than a politics based on difference, but a universalising politics from the point of view of the diverse groups within it.'* While the willingness of groups to unite in fighting globalisation directly challenges Melluci's characterisation of 'nomadic' activists, the lack of a coherent program for collective action, results, in part, from the difficulty of discovering or designing such a 'universalising politics' --but this is not the same as having *no* program. If globalisation is to continue being a lightning rod for constituencies adversely affected by the current phase of capitalist expansion, defining a program from the cognitive praxis of working together is crucial.

Knowledge gained from working together means finding ways to overcome or to live with areas of essential disagreement. The APEC opposition provides an answer to Hirsch's (1988) speculation that NSMs might unwittingly become part of the new ruling class hegemonic bloc, that, since the time of his writing, has emerged in all of its neo-liberal trappings. The APEC opposition, is evidence that no such co-optation has occurred (although some may accuse those in favour of engagement as having

succumbed to co-optation). Nevertheless, the AELM also demonstrated that there are a variety of positions taken towards the post-Fordist bloc. There is a seemingly irreconcilable breach between those who want to change it to include the interests of the subordinated and those who oppose any such move. Furthermore, as chapter 4 on NTA's collective identity reveals, even among those who take the same general position there are a number of significant cleavages, between 'grassroots' and 'mainstream' groups, for example.

Despite the ongoing struggles within the left, Gramsci's concept of hegemony and its critique of capitalist development remains a valid model for an ongoing 'war of position' against capital. Because there are chronic fractures within the left which prevent achieving the common agenda required to form an historical bloc, developing a radical praxis that opposes interlocking hegemonies (Morris 1992) should be the first priority of any movement that aspires to combine forces with others. Coalitions can contribute to this process because they offer diverse groups a unique means of challenging dominant codes and relations of ruling. Because, to use Radhakrishnan's words, rainbow coalitions do not have an 'official reality' --that is, they do not conform to an institutionalised *politics as usual*-- they represent 'a transgression of the hegemonic political space' (Radhakrishnan, 1989: 325). For this reason, their putatively limited and ephemeral nature should be valued rather than dismissed as inferior to more permanent organisations. Above all, they offer a microcosmic glimpse of the challenges to be confronted in constructing an historical bloc. The knowledge gained in the exercise of coalition-building feeds back into social movement communities which are the only possible sources of such a momentous social and political formation.

## Footnotes

### Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> Some may disagree with the use of this term to describe the three main opposition groups, since within one of them, the People's Summit, there were those who argued for "engaging" with APEC. However, if not rejecting APEC outright, these groups were, at a minimum, opposed to its framing and intent.

<sup>2</sup> The APEC Alert group on campus must take particular credit for this.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 1 for description of the three organisations.

<sup>4</sup> NSM activists may call 'capital' something else - "business interests" or "corporations," for example.

<sup>5</sup> Determining that people's actions have "unintended consequences" is also valuable in this respect. By showing that the negative impact of an action perpetrated by an individual or group on others was not an intended result of the action, community tensions can be reduced.

<sup>6</sup> See documentation in appendix 3.

### Chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> A number of studies of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament indicate substantial levels of membership drawn from among highly educated members of the middle class. Eg. F. Parkin *Middle Class Radicalism* Manchester: Manchester University press 1968. and R. Taylor and C. Pritchard *The protest Makers: the British Nuclear Disarmament Movement of 1958-1965 Twenty years on*, Oxford: Pergamon, 1980

<sup>8</sup> In the last chapter I will employ the work of Antonio Gramsci to examine the historical significance of opposition to APEC and, by extension, to globalisation.

### Chapter 3.

<sup>9</sup> However, I am confident that the strong attachments that participants had to their social and political groupings offset bias that I may have inadvertently introduced into the questions that I asked.

<sup>10</sup> See appendix 4 for interview questions.

### Chapter 4.

<sup>11</sup> "Civil society" is used here to describe those institutions and the complex system of social groupings which exist outside of the state in the form of Non-Governmental Organisations and which "educate around sustainable human development issues. As a generic term it includes trade unions but excludes the private, for profit, business sector." *Draft paper prepared by the working Group, Canadian Organising Network for the 1997 People's Summit on APEC*, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> "Framing" refers to the mobilisation of beliefs and ideas in the course of social movement emergence. Social Movement Organisations "frame or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilise potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilise antagonists." D. Snow and R. Benford, *Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilisation*, International and Social Movement Research Vol. 1 1988, p.198.

<sup>13</sup> The initiating groups were: the Grassroots Women Discussion Group; the BC committee for Human Rights in the Philippines; the Filipino Canadian Youth Alliance (Ugnayan); the Philippine Women Centre; SIKLAB, (a migrant worker's organisation); the Third World Alliance and individuals from various local organisations.

<sup>14</sup> BAYAN, formed in 1984, operates legally and openly in the Philippines. It mainly operates in the urban areas of the Philippines. The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an underground organisation (even though technically, it is legal) which came into existence in 1973, one year after the Marcos dictatorship came to power. It is, like BAYAN, an umbrella organisation committed to realising national self-determination. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is a member of this organisation. It espouses a political ideology of Marxism-Leninism Mao-Zedong thought. The New People's Army is the military wing of the CPP and is engaged in an armed struggle with the government of the Philippines. The NDFP is currently holding peace negotiations with the government of the Philippines.

<sup>15</sup> "Declaration of the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation (Quezon City, Philippines, November 21-23 1996)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> "...for the No! to APEC coalition, it is using the general declaration and resolutions of the 1996 PCAIG as a major working document to give direction to its campaign and the 1997 People's Conference." 'No! To APEC news letter' April 1997. See Appendix 5 for 1997 PCAIG General Declaration

<sup>18</sup> The basis of unity is part of a founding document which spells out the "Basic Principles" of the coalition. It describes the basis of unity as "political" -allowing for different interpretations and remedies for the problem of imperialism. See appendix 5. for full text.

<sup>19</sup> There were NTA coalitions in Toronto (group membership, 16), Montreal (group membership 4) Ottawa (1 group) and across the United States there were 19 member groups. See appendix 1 for a full list of NTA member organisations.

<sup>20</sup> These categorisations are approximate only; many of the organisations overlapped in terms of their mission or purpose. For example, solidarity groups supporting organisations involved in third world political and economic struggles are often also involved in supporting human rights initiatives or women's emancipatory projects in third world locations.

<sup>21</sup> NTA committed itself to conduct internal studies and discussions on APEC in order to "deepen our knowledge of APEC and globalisation" 'Draft preliminary assessment of BC. NTA coalition, Jan 1997.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 5 for a full description of the committee responsibilities.

<sup>23</sup> Quote taken from 'The No-To-APEC Coalition and the 1997 People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation' final guidelines and principles, April 1997. See Appendix 5

<sup>24</sup> See appendix 5.

<sup>25</sup> 'General Declaration of the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation: Continuing the Resistance!' November 21-24, 1997, Vancouver, Salish Territory, Canada. See Appendix 5.

<sup>26</sup> A more traditional term might be "solidarity" which implies a sense of belongingness, sympathetic feelings and a sense of a common fate (Diani, 1992)

<sup>27</sup> Suzanne Staggenborg uses the term 'social movement community' to describe 'all actors who share and advance the goals of a social movement.' This community includes inter-linked individuals, institutions and social movement organisations. (Staggenborg 1998).

<sup>28</sup> These were the main actors involved at the time of the AELM, however, there were others. Two other groups organised against APEC, one was the "Feminist Networking Group" called together by the Vancouver Status of Women which organised a "Women's Day of Protest" anti-APEC campaign and which organised a rally of about 150 women outside a downtown gala dinner hosting APEC dignitaries on the 24<sup>th</sup> Nov. Art Against APEC, was a group of Vancouver artists who organised to distribute information about the Impact of APEC on cultural sovereignty. They staged a number of events around town, supported both NTA and the PS and contributed a cultural component to NTA's march. On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov a demonstration was organised by local Chinese, Tibetan and Taiwanese solidarity groups who organised a rally of 1,700 people outside a downtown hotel where the city was hosting a \$1,000 dollar-a-plate dinner for Jiang Zemin the president of China.

<sup>29</sup> One activist noted that, often, the media, particularly at first, thought that NTA was part of the PS.

<sup>30</sup> Scepticism regarding the mainstream media's willingness to rely on sources other than those supplied by government, state-security organisations, official summit organisers or ancillary services/ interests appears to have some foundation in the case of the *Vancouver Sun*. Between Oct 1<sup>st</sup> and Nov 27<sup>th</sup>, the *Vancouver Sun* published categories of reports dealing with the APEC Summit in the following numbers: Opposition stories - NTA (4) PS (7 + 2 opinion pieces by organisers) AA (9) Other (2) Total (24). Non-critical establishment sourced stories - Summit agenda (30) Government Strategy (6 + 3 opinion pieces by politicians) Business issues (4) Security issues (6) Food and Entertainment (8) Total: 57. In-depth features including aspects of arguments represented by all sides (2).

<sup>31</sup> Core AA activists that I spoke to acknowledged that they initially planned to highlight human rights as a way to attract supporters to the campaign. This plan was successful but interfered with later planned developments. When they tried to change the focus of the campus campaign to economic issues such as free trade, the goals of the mobilisation had become strongly associated with human rights in the minds of both the media and of the student body.

<sup>32</sup> The PS had a number of "issue forums" within an overall conference, whereas NTA had two conferences one focused on issues relating to women and one on issues relating to youth prior to the main conference.



<sup>33</sup> A key informant from the PS said that the PS could not be considered a "grassroots" organisation since it was mainly co-ordinated by paid NGO or union staff who volunteered their time. The PS did not have as extensive an outreach campaign as NTA, although an article in the Vancouver of Status of Women newspaper *Kinesis* reported four organising and educational meetings held by the International Women's Conference in various lower mainland locations prior to the main conference. Cenen Bagon interviewed by Lisa Valencia Svensson 'Implementing Our Vision' in *Kinesis*, Nov 1997, p.12.

<sup>34</sup> A key informant from AA described the campus campaign tactics -which included a human rights focus and civil disobedience- for their intrinsic merit as well as to gain support from other students. Both AA informants described an on-going campaign of education and networking, one disagreed with the assertion that AA had not organised collectively. At its height, AA's campaign had a core activist group of approximately fifty. The events of Nov 25 1997 are, by now, well known. A crowd of about 2,000 protesters were confronted by the RCMP at a security fence. Many then, and later, were pepper-sprayed by the police. Many protesters were arrested.

<sup>35</sup> One activist acknowledged, giving the example of 'church people' that the 'middle class left' had grassroots activists of its own.

<sup>36</sup> An AA activist confirmed that the core group of AA organisers were largely made up of anarchists, although students who joined later were from different political traditions.

#### **Chapter 5.**

<sup>37</sup> One of the centre group activists said that he and others played down class analysis due to the coalition being "too broad for its inclusion." Another stated that a section on capitalist development was dropped from the pop-ed program. Nevertheless, two of the non-centre group and one early member of the coalition that I spoke to complained of the use of "off-putting" Marxist terminology within the coalition.

<sup>38</sup> I will comment later on two meetings regarding the conference, this one in October and one held in June where the subject of the conference logistics became controversial.

#### **Chapter 6.**

<sup>39</sup> Those women who had been involved reported that their time in the GRWDG was valuable.

<sup>40</sup> A centre activist testified that indeed the details of the conference *had* been agreed to by coalition months before. See P. 158.

<sup>41</sup> This term refers to the use of consensus decision-making: "consensus is a process for making decisions without voting. Agreement is reached through a process of gathering information and viewpoints, discussion, persuasion, a combination of synthesis of proposals and/or the development of totally new ones. The goal of the consensus process is to reach a decision with which everyone can agree. Consensus at its best relies upon persuasion rather than pressure for reaching group unity." (V. Coover, E. Deacon, C. Esser, C. Moore, 1985 p.52)

<sup>42</sup> Whether or not racism was a factor in the evolution of the coalition is difficult to determine from the data, including from my own observations. The suggestion that it might have been is thought-provoking; nevertheless, the evidence is ambiguous compared to the large amount of information purporting to explain tensions originating from organisational politics and group priorities. This evidence does not preclude the possibility that racial dynamics may have been involved in these tensions (for example see p.186 'white liberal guilt'). As I discuss later, and following the lead of the activist quoted above, there appeared to be core allegiances at work in terms of local versus 'third-world' perspectives. These allegiances were implicit in aspects of the coalition's internal social relations. See page 218.

#### **Chapter 7.**

<sup>43</sup> This is an example of what could be described as an "intervening condition." See intro to *Findings*.

<sup>44</sup> This claim may seem to be confounded by the fact that the REM committee which was responsible for community education had a large centre group membership. However, the claim stands because the REM committee's actions can be construed as neutral in prioritising work directed towards either the march and rally or towards the conference -its efforts benefited both equally. The centre group members on CoCo, with support from the centre group activists, were primarily involved with the long-term planning for the conference.

#### **Chapter 8.**

<sup>45</sup> As I have mentioned, with regard to decision-making, the basis of unity was cited by the centre group as a framework within which decisions were taken. Also, the argument was forwarded that decisions were

approved by the "majority" before implementation. Significantly, reference to the coalition's founding document as to how decisions were fairly or unfairly made was only superficially referred to by two non-centre activists. The centre group claimed that it was working from this standard as a guide to making decisions. Because the issue of decision-making was not openly discussed during the life of the coalition, the non-centre group was not aware of this explication.

<sup>46</sup> One initiative did take place in Vancouver - the formation of an anti-transnational mining corporation group- which framed its campaign in terms of anti-imperialist politics. The PWC groups did a presentation at the group's conference.

<sup>47</sup> A master-frame provides the "ideational or interpretive anchoring" (Snow and Benford 1988, p. 212) in the form of an overarching explanation of an issue which has the "capacity to integrate various micro-mobilisation groups." (Gerhards and Rucht 1992 p. 575).

<sup>48</sup> What I term prescriptive, Snow and Benford term "prognostic framing" which follows from "diagnostic framing" by suggesting solutions and identifying strategies, tactics and targets. (Snow and Benford 1988. P.201.

<sup>49</sup> See basis of unity Appendix 5.

<sup>50</sup> The 'Basic Principles' state, "Members of the coalition are guided by the principles of independence, initiative, mutual support consultation and cooperation among its members" appendix 5, p.350 The point made here is that the first two principles can potentially be in conflict with the last three.

<sup>51</sup> One reason that the picture is murky is that there appeared to be differences of tradition within the non-centre group, so an accurate claim of difference along the line of divide identified so far remains somewhat problematic.

#### **Chapter 9.**

<sup>52</sup> Mueller (1994) points out that this is a misreading of Melluci's work since the discourse of collective identity construction takes place in a submerged -not a public place. In her work she therefore creates four levels by separating off submerged meaning construction into its own category apart from public circulation of the movement's themes and identities.

<sup>53</sup> The authors maintain that 'cognitive praxis' is a core activity of social movements. By this they mean the interlacing of strategic activity with communicative processes in constituting and maintaining collective identity.

#### **Chapter 10.**

<sup>54</sup> In his study of the Dutch Peace movement's anti-nuclear weapons petition, Kriesi (1988b) found that countercultural networks played such a significant part in the campaign that "elaborate countercultural networks seem to have a kind of automobilising capacity that makes direct mobilization attempts almost superfluous (p.73). In other words, constituents embedded in the networks became active without being contacted by organisations.

#### **Chapter 11.**

<sup>55</sup> Here I use the term *arena* as "an action system in which, under the eyes of the public, a major fight between a social movement and its opponent takes place" (Rucht 1988 p.323).

<sup>56</sup> Including the emergence of reactionary ethnic nationalism and reactionary identity movements- see Friedman (1993).

<sup>57</sup> Giugni's data is derived from crossnational similarities between European movements. Due to the uneven development of capitalism, the resilience of the nation-state system and lack of a common political organisation such as the European Union, the process of structural affinity between first and third world locations is likely to be impeded by these and other factors.

<sup>58</sup> This conceptualisation of the terrain on which mobilisation takes place is not far removed from the RMT notion of 'political opportunity structure.' Also, the model of historical development put forward by Gramsci is not unrelated to the idea of 'cycles of protest' -although, of course, Tarrow et al would not key the appearance of such protest simply to regime crises caused by contradictions arising from within the economic structure.

<sup>59</sup> Gleaned from PS, AA and NTA literature.

<sup>60</sup> The authors offer examples of this: "the universalisation of the wage relation, the elaboration of cultural industries as branches of capitalist production, the related colonisation of the lifeworld by the commodity form, the globalisation of economic relations..." (Carroll and Ratner 1994 p.18).

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## **Appendix 1.**

### **Organisation List**

**Name: No! To APEC. 1996-1997**

#### **Members:**

APEC Action Group -Simon Fraser University Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)

APEC Alert -University of British Columbia. \*

BC Central American Student Alliance

BC Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines \*

Canadian Youth Network for Asia Pacific Solidarity \*

Canadian Community Action Project

Christian Task Force on Central America \*

Canadian Latino American Community Society

Comite de Solidaridad con Chile

Comite de Solidaridad con los Presos Politicos en Chile

End Legislated Poverty \*

Environmental Youth Alliance \*

East Timor Alert Network -Vancouver

Freedom Socialist Party/ Radical Women

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women -Canada

Grandview-Woodlands Area Council

Grassroots Women Discussion Group

Green Party \*

Guideposts for Sustainable Future

Langara Students Union

La Quena Collective \*

Latin American Connexions \*

Lifecycles

New Socialists -Vancouver Group

Nuestra Voz

Philippine Women Centre of BC \*

Settlers in Support of Indigenous Struggles

SIKLAB (Filipino migrant workers group) \*

Socialist Challenge \*

Third World Alliance \*

Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada / Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance \*

Vancouver International of Hope \*

Under the Volcano \*

Women and Children Creating Community Society \*

Young Socialists

\* NTA activists came from these organisations -some belonged to more than one. There were a number of activists who did not belong to any organisation.



**NTA Main Events:**

**Women and Children's Conference** Vancouver, June 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> 1997,  
attendance: 109

**Youth and Students say No! To APEC** Conference September 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> 1997,  
attendance: 70

**People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation (PCAIG)** November 21-24<sup>th</sup>  
1997, Attendance: 300 (including volunteers)

**International Youth and Student Caucus** November 27-28<sup>th</sup> 1997, attendance: 40

**No! To APEC -Continuing the Resistance March and Rally** November 25<sup>th</sup>  
attendance: 1,500-2000

**Name: People's Summit** 1996-1997

**Members:**

Amnesty International  
APEC Research and Information Network  
BC Council for International Cooperation  
BC Federation of Labour  
BC Teachers Federation  
Canada Asia Working Group (Canadian Council of Churches)  
Canadian Catholics for Development and Peace  
Canadian Council on International Cooperation  
Canadian Environmental Network  
Canadian Federation of Students  
Canadian Labour Congress  
Common Front on the WTO/Sierra Club  
Council of Canadians  
East Timor Alert Network  
End Legislated Poverty  
End the Arms Race  
Forum Populaire sur L'APEC  
Institute of Asia Research, UBC  
International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development  
National Action Committee on the Status of Women  
Network on Human Rights  
Primates World Relief and Development Fund (Anglican Church of Canada)  
Union of BC Indian Chiefs  
United Church of Canada  
Vancouver and District Labour Council

**PS Main Events:**

**Youth Forum** November 7-11<sup>th</sup>

**Domestic Workers Conference** November 15-16<sup>th</sup>

**Second International Women's Conference Against APEC** November 17-18<sup>th</sup>.

**Public Education and Research Forum** November 19-20<sup>th</sup>

**Sustainability Issues Forum** November 20<sup>th</sup>

**Indigenous People's Forum** Nov 20-21<sup>st</sup>

**Worker's Rights and Democratic Development** November 20<sup>th</sup>

**Canadian Arms Trade to the Asia Pacific** November 20-21<sup>st</sup>

**The People Versus Poverty: Who Will Win?** November 21<sup>st</sup>

**APEC's Corporate Agenda** November 21<sup>st</sup>

**Open Markets, Open Media?** November 19<sup>th</sup>

Attendance at all forums: 1000.

**March for Global Justice** November 23<sup>rd</sup>, attendance 4,500

**Name:** APEC Alert (UBC) January 1997- November 1997

**Members:** The APEC Alert Newsletter of September 1997 describes the organisation as "a grassroots group encompassing students, staff, faculty and others."

**Main Events:**

The APEC Alert group organised many events on campus -the following are a few:

**Protest at the farewell party of departing president Strangway** July 29<sup>th</sup>

**First line of an expanding series of lines radiating out from the "Goddess of Democracy" statue is painted** September 8<sup>th</sup>

**APEC Alert sponsored student forum on APEC** September 26<sup>th</sup>

**Tent City "Democracy Village" established outside the Student Union Building and later outside the Museum of Anthropology** November 17<sup>th</sup>

**Occupation of Brock Hall where "speak-out sessions held** November 24<sup>th</sup>

**Rally at the Goddess of Democracy statue and a march to the security zone** November 25<sup>th</sup> attendance: 2000-3000

## **Appendix 2.**

### **Abbreviations**

AA	APEC Alert
AELM	APEC Economic Leader's Meeting
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
BAYAN	Bagong Alyansang Makabayan or New Patriotic Alliance.
FCYA	Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance (Ugnayan ng Pilipino sa Canada)
GRWDG	Grassroots Women Discussion Group.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation.
NTA	No! To APEC (No! to Anti-People Economic Control)
NDFP	National Democratic Front of the Philippines
OECD	Organisation of Economic Development and Cooperation.
PCAIG	People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalisation
PS	People's Summit
PWC	Philippine Women Centre.
WTO	World Trade Organisation

### **Committees**

CoCo	Coordinating Committee
MOB	Mobilisation Committee
REM	Research Education and Media Committee

## **Appendix 4**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NTA MEMBERS**

#### **Activist history and orientation to NTA.**

1. How did your life circumstances or past history bring you to a point that NTA was an organisation you wanted to join?
2. Were you involved with other groups or actions prior to NTA?
3. What area of political work is of primary interest to you?
4. In what ways has involvement in NTA been consistent with this interest and with the interest of other groups that you may have been involved with?
5. Are there events happening in Canada and in the world beyond Canada which can explain how NTA came into being?
6. Do you see NTA as a group which has been in some way swimming against the mainstream? If so, what were some of the ways that NTA challenged the mainstream culture?

#### **NTA and People's Summit**

1. Why did you or your group decide to get involved with NTA rather than the People's Summit?
2. How does the PS differ from NTA?
3. Are people in the PS different from you or others in NTA?
4. Do you see NTA and the People's Summit as competing organisations- or are they in some way complementary?
5. Would you say that NTA is a more legitimate or representative body of progressive dissent with respect to APEC than an organisation like the People's Summit?
6. Do you think that the differences between NTA and the PS have any repercussions for the unity of progressive groups in challenging economic/imperialist globalisation.

### **Involvement in NTA.**

1. Are you in a group that is part of the NTA coalition? If so, which one and how long have you been a member of that group? Do you belong to more than one group in NTA?
  2. Was your recruitment to NTA the result of personal ties? Over the course of time did you develop personal ties with other active members of NTA?
  3. Which committee(s) and/or activities have you been involved in while part of NTA?
  4. What would you say were the goals and objectives of NTA and how were these the same or different from your own goals as a member of some other social movements and/or from those of the group(s) to which you belong?
  5. Were there developments during the NTA campaign which were at odds with the values, goals or objectives of other social movements to which you belong or with those of the coalition member group to which you belong?
  6. If your answer to the above question is **no**, what explains the agreement between the values, goals and objectives belonging to other social movements of which you are a part, or of the group to which you belong, and those of NTA? If your answer to the above is **yes**, have you adjusted or become reconciled to this incongruity (such that you were able to stay active in the coalition?) Explain.
  7. What were some of the tensions that you perceived existed among different coalition member groups in NTA? Did these add or take away from NTA achieving its goals?
- Probe:** Did ideological or philosophical differences between coalition members create problems in achieving solidarity within the coalition?
- Probe:** Did differing strategic or tactical priorities of members cause problems of any kind?
8. Apart from tensions that might have existed between member groups, were there tensions which existed between different internal sections of NTA (for example, between those working/living at the Philippine Women's Centre and those focusing their activities outside of the centre, or between different committees)? How did these tensions manifest themselves?
  9. How did such tensions within the coalition get resolved?

10. NTA was a time-limited coalition. What effect did this have, if any, on coalition solidarity and strategy?
11. Did NTA achieve a collective identity, i.e. one such that you and others were able to say "NTA stands for.....?" If **no** why not? If **yes** what were some of the elements that defined NTA's collective identity?
12. Was there a point at which NTA's identity and your own identity came together such that you were able to say that "NTA is *my* group?" If **no** why not? If **yes**, what was happening at that point, and did the realisation last?
13. What have you learned from your participation in NTA? **Probe:** have there been any valuable lessons that have come out of the experience about ways to challenge the powers that be? What was encouraging and what was discouraging about the campaign?

#### **NTA and External Relations**

1. NTA placed a lot of emphasis on community education. Who were the people that NTA was most trying to reach through its workshops?
2. How successful was it in getting its message across? What were some of the difficulties? Were there ways that it could have been more effective in getting its message across?
3. The two tactics of public action chosen by NTA were public forums/workshops and demonstrations; How well did these tactics relate to each other?
4. Looking back, do you think that the amount of time and resources devoted to each of these tactics was about right, or should there have been more time and resources devoted to one or to the other?
5. NTA emphasized building both international solidarity and local solidarity. What problems or difficulties were encountered in achieving these goals? Was one achieved at the expense of the other or was there a good balance between the two objectives?
6. NTA prided itself on being a "grassroots" organisation. What do you understand by the meaning of this term and how successful was NTA in achieving a) outreach to the "grassroots" and b) in mobilising the "grassroots?"

7. Was NTA trying in any way to exert a political influence on institutions or organisations which were not grassroots e.g. on the government or on business? **If not**, was this a conscious decision? **If so**, was NTA successful?
8. How would you characterise NTA's relationship to the media?
9. In what ways did NTA use the media to further its goals and objectives? In what ways did the media use NTA?
10. Do you think that NTA has in any way helped to consolidate an opposition to imperialist globalisation?
11. Has NTA been successful in challenging the powers that be, or are you dispirited by the outcome of the NTA campaign?
12. Has the anti-APEC experience reinforced or altered your conception or understanding of progressive politics in effecting social change?
13. What developments on the left do you see as necessary for continuing the resistance to APEC?

#### **Globalisation.**

1. What do you see as the main aspects of what is termed globalisation?
2. What role, if any, does imperialism play in the process of globalisation?
3. The society that we live in can be said to be structured by a system of social inequalities patterned along lines of gender, class, and ethnicity. (*I will verbally acknowledge that inequality is not limited to these categories*) Does economic globalisation improve or worsen each of these inequalities? If it worsens them, how does it have this effect?
4. Do you think that a strategy based on a material politics i.e. a politics aimed at rectifying material and economic inequities or a strategy based on cultural politics, i.e. a politics aimed at changing ours and other's views of ourselves, of what is 'normal' or 'valuable,' can best address the root causes of problems created by globalisation?

## **INTERVIEW FOR PEOPLE'S SUMMIT RESPONDENTS**

### **Section a. The People's Summit.**

1. What are the main groups involved in the People's Summit?
2. What group do you belong to that is part of the People's Summit and how is your group involved in the Summit?
3. What is Your group's view of APEC?
4. Is there a discrepancy between your group's views and general or mainstream views of APEC and if there is, how would you account for this?
5. What does your group hope to accomplish as a result of participation in the People's Summit?
6. What do you see as the main differences of opinion or position among groups affiliated to the People's Summit?
7. What difficulties do these differences pose in achieving a unified resolution at the P.S.?
8. What resolutions, if any, are likely to arise from the P.S.?
9. Do you think that the P.S. will have any influence on the APEC leader's Summit, or on the APEC process itself?

### **People's Summit and NTA.**

1. How does the P.S. differ from N.T.A.?
2. Was your group eligible to join the NTA coalition; if not, why not?
3. Do you see the P.S. as working together with alternative coalitions such as NTA or are they separate or in some sense competing organisations?

Appendix 4



4. Would you say that the P.S. is a more legitimate or representative body of progressive dissent with respect to APEC than a group such as the NTA coalition? If so, why? and if not, why not?

5. Do you think that the difference between the position of the NTA coalition and that of the P.S. represents any repercussions for the unity of progressive groups in challenging economic globalisation?

### **Globalisation.**

1. What do you see as the main aspects of what is termed globalisation?

2. What role if any does imperialism play in the process of globalisation?

3. The society that we live in can be said to be structured by a system of inequalities patterned along lines of gender, class, and ethnicity. (*verbally acknowledge that inequality is not limited to these categories*). Does economic globalisation improve or worsen each of these inequalities? If it worsens them, how does it have this effect?

4. Do you think that a strategy based on material politics i.e. a politics aimed at rectifying material and economic inequities or a strategy based on cultural politics, i.e. a politics aimed at changing ours and others' views of ourselves, of what is 'normal' or 'valuable' can best address the root causes of problems created by globalisation? Explain.

### Appendix 4

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR AA RESPONDENTS

1. How did APEC Alert come together as an organisation?
2. How did you become part of APEC Alert?
3. What, if any, were the differences in political strategies or tactics between NTA and AA?
4. The media seemed to describe the three main groups opposed to/critical of APEC as the PS, AA and NTA. Was this an accurate portrayal?
5. In what ways was the PS different or similar to AA and NTA (if at all)?
6. In terms of the opposition organised against the APEC leader's summit, how would you describe the contribution of each of these organisations?
7. Which of the strategies or tactics employed by each of these organisations achieved the greatest success in a) mobilising opposition to APEC b) having a critical impact on the image and goals of the APEC leader's summit?
8. Were the strategies or tactics employed by these organisations different but complementary in mounting an opposition to APEC?
9. In general, what were some of the tensions and differences of position or philosophy that arose across the whole field of active opposition to APEC?
10. What have you learned from the last few months of activism against APEC?  
**Probe:** have there been any valuable lessons that have come out of the experience about ways to challenge the powers that be? What was encouraging and what was discouraging about the actions of the past few months?
11. What, if anything have you learnt about the strength or weaknesses of national and/or international capitalism in the last few months?
12. How successful were the APEC leaders and their political infrastructure in being able to pursue a counter-campaign to those opposing them?
13. Has the anti-APEC experience reinforced or altered your conception or understanding of progressive left politics in effecting social change?
14. What developments on the left locally do you see as necessary for continuing the resistance to APEC ?

15. What developments on the left internationally do you see as necessary for continuing the resistance to APEC?

# The No-to-APEC Coalition and the 1997 People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization

## Basic Principles

The NTAC is a broad coalition of grassroots organizations and individuals formed on the basis of opposition to APEC and imperialism. Specifically, its objectives and basis of unity are as follows:

1. **Expose** free trade myths and the anti-people effects of APEC and free trade
2. **Oppose** imperialist globalization and the US-Japan domination of the Asia Pacific
3. **Build** a grassroots coalition against APEC and a critical understanding of APEC and the present global crisis.
4. **Strengthen** strategies of resistance, ability to organize for alternatives and international anti-imperialist solidarity.

The main character of the coalition is determined by the above basis of unity. Members of the coalition are guided by the principles of independence, initiative, mutual support, consultation and cooperation among its members. The coalition respects the rights of member to carry out their own initiative and independent activities beyond the coalition and its mandate.

Our political unity is based on **opposition to APEC and imperialism** not "to reform or engage " APEC. The task therefore, is to deepen our understanding of imperialism and APEC as a tool of imperialist globalization. We may disagree as to the precise meaning of imperialism but this should not divide us in our coalition work. For instance, some may believe that imperialism is a matter of government policy which could be changed or reformed without changing the capitalist system. Others believe that imperialism is capitalism at its highest stage of historical development and the only way to get rid of it is to change the capitalist system itself. These are legitimate issues for discussions that should not divide the coalition and our opposition to imperialism and APEC.

We recognize the need to revive and reassert the word "imperialism" as a description of global capitalism. While related concepts such as "neo-liberalism," "corporate agenda," "neo-colonialism," "free trade agenda," are acceptable and good words for our purposes, we prefer to use the term "imperialism" or "imperialist globalization" to describe modern-day capitalism.

## Organizational Principles

The NTAC is a **working coalition**.. This means that it is not organized along a single, centralized line of leadership. Some individuals do not necessarily represent their organizations in the coalition. Beyond its objectives and basis of unity, the coalition respects the organizational independence and initiative of its member organizations.

The coalition has **four working committees** to facilitate its work. Involvement in the coalition is either through **active participation** in the coalition's activities or through

endorsement and support of its objectives and programs. Active participation is on individual basis and being an active member in any of the committees through voluntary participation.

The committees are functioning committees which make decisions within their competence and recommend these decisions through the coordinating committee.

**1. Coordinating committee - (COCO)**

- a. The other committees have a representative in this committee.
- b. It facilitates and invites people to coalition meetings.
- c. It coordinates with other committees.
- d. Acts as the general office and logistical hub of the coalition.

Its functions are:

- Does the day-to-day work of the coalition and implements its policies and programs.
- Follows up tasks and their implementation.
- Coordinates national and international networking.
- Prepares for the November 1997 People's Conference together with the other committees.

**2. Fundraising committee - (FC)**

- a. In charge of the finances of the coalition.
- b. It organizes fund-raising, prepares budget and negotiate contracts.
- c. It solicits and collects donations.

**3. Research, education and media (REM)**

- a. takes care of all materials related to APEC, imperialism and other educational materials relevant to the campaign.
- b. Takes charge of and coordinates the coalition's newsletter, external and internal education and media campaigns.
- c. Generates materials for discussions, designs workshops and does research.
- d. Coordinates with mobilization regarding community workshops
- e. Takes care of speakers for the coalition public events.

**4. Mobilization (MOB)**

- a. Takes care of public mobilization and security in these mobilizations.
- b. Contacts community groups and generates phone lists.
- c. Coordinates materials distribution at events including posters distribution and coordination.
- d. Sets up workshop opportunities in coordination with REM.
- e. Actively engages other people to build support for the coalition.

**3. Decision-making process**

- 3.1 Decisions and resolutions are preferably arrived at by consensus but a majority will be acceptable without prejudice to the right of the minority to opt out of (not to sign or approved) the decision. This means that the majority cannot impose on the minority and the minority cannot stop the work of the majority. We collect points that we agree on and lay aside points that we disagree.

- 3.2 Voting (either by show of hands or secret ballot) is essentially a method to find out the positions of members and the degree of consensus and/or agreement that has been achieved.

#### 4. The November NTAC People's Conference

- 4.1 The November international conference is called "People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization - *Continuing the Resistance*." This conference is the continuation of the historic 1996 People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization held in Manila, Philippines last November 1996. It is also a response of a growing grassroots movement among Canadians against APEC and imperialism. As well, this is part of the process of helping build and strengthen the international anti-imperialist movement both in Canada and the world over. Specifically, the conference would have the following objectives:

- a) Sharply project the coalition's position against APEC and imperialist globalization.

The coalition's position is to expose and oppose APEC and imperialism. This means understanding the globalizing tendency of capitalism as an economic system and its historic development into imperialism. It also means understanding capitalism's destructive impact in the economic, social, political and cultural lives of people. APEC should be seen as another tool (this time in the Asia Pacific region) of imperialism in the process of its globalization.

Imperialist globalization carries three major elements which must be understood, exposed and opposed: These are trade and investment liberalization, deregulation and privatization.

In exposing APEC and imperialism the conference should be able to highlight the simmering contradictions between US and Japan in dividing up the Asia Pacific into spheres of economic influence. The role of Canadian capitalism within APEC should also be stressed. It may be a junior partner of the US and Japan but Canadian capitalism has substantial interests in the region and considers the Asia Pacific as its main area for investment and expansion.

- b) Help consolidate the gains of the 1996 People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization

One of the major gains of the 1996 People's Conference is the establishment of an international network of anti-APEC/anti-imperialist groups and individuals. The other is the international people's campaign against imperialist globalization spearheaded by BAYAN and this international network. Our 1997 conference will help to consolidate these gains and thereby strengthen and further build this international network.

- c) Consolidate the coalition, its members and its supporters

The conference is the culmination of our year long campaign. This should be a venue for the coalition and its members to further strengthen their commitment in the struggle against APEC and imperialist globalization. Hopefully, the conference would be able to draw in more Canadians into the anti-imperialist movement and help deepen the understanding of its members and supporters about APEC and imperialism. The coalition should also serve to deepen our anti-imperialist commitment and to help develop skilled activists among its ranks.

- d) Help build the anti-imperialist movement inside and outside Canada.

We are part of the growing international anti-imperialist movement both inside and outside Canada. This conference should be able to help enhance the growth of this movement and develop closer links and communication among ourselves. It should help raise the level of our understanding of imperialism and our struggle against it.

- 4.2 The conference builds on the achievements of the 1996 People's Conference and the anti-imperialist struggles of Canadians. It bases its activities on the 1996 People's Conference general declaration and resolutions and the anti-imperialist movement in Canada. The coalition therefore, sets as a major task the study of these general declaration and resolutions and the anti-imperialist movement in Canada.
- 4.3 The conference hopes to discuss and study the potential building of a global working body that would help coordinate a network of international anti-imperialist forces and help prepare for future anti-imperialist conferences, consultations or campaigns.
- 4.4 Coalition members should popularize the 1997 People's Conference within and beyond Vancouver.

**(These are the final guidelines and principles as approved by the coalition.)**

April 1997

# **NO! to APEC coalition**

**Network Opposed to Anti-People Economic Control**

c/o Kalayaan Centre • 451 Powell St., Vancouver, B.C., CANADA, V6A 1G7 • phone (604) 215-9190 • fax (604) 215-1103 • E-mail at [notoapec@vcn.bc.ca](mailto:notoapec@vcn.bc.ca)

## **GENERAL DECLARATION**

**People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization:  
Continuing the Resistance!**

**November 21-24, 1997 Vancouver, Salish Territory, Canada**

We, the 299 participants from 15 countries of the Asia-Pacific, North, South and Central America, India, Africa and Europe have come together in the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization - Continuing the Resistance on November 21-24, 1997 to resist imperialist globalilzation and say NO to APEC. We have taken the theme "Continuing the Resistance" to reaffirm the analysis of the 1996 People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization Declaration and Resolutions.

What has happened since confirms the conclusion of the 1996 People's Conference which stated that "the promised new world economic order of prosperity is far from coming. Emerging instead is a new world disorder far more destructive of the lives of billions of people in the industrial and non-industrial countries alike. The proscribed path, free trade, is not free at all."

The declaration also noted that the major and minor imperialist powers were using regional free trade blocs- principally the European Union, the NAFTA , APEC - to speed up the World Trade Organization trade and investment liberalization timetable, even as they attempt to secure their national and regional markets.

From this declaration the participants resolved to collectively oppose imperialist globalization in every way and by every means possible in their respective countries and worldwide. Our gathering this week continues this expression collective opposition and resistance against APEC and imperialist globalization.

A fast-spreading economic and financial turmoil now besets the world capitalist system on the eve of the 5th APEC Leaders Summit. This belies the triumphalist claim that the scourge of the boom-and-bust cycle has ended, and that the era of continued economic growth has arrived. In fact, the turmoil has exposed as rotten the much-vaunted "strong fundamentals" of monopoly capitalism.

The turmoil initially hit the "emergent markets" of Southeast Asia, till lately the darling of global investors and profiteers. Then it spread its "contagion" to the main capital markets. It was spawned, to a large extent, by the rapid trade and investment liberalization policies adopted by the governments mesmerized by the mantras of imperialist globalization: "liberalize, deregulate, privatize." Global speculative capital drives down the weak currencies of the faltering economies of Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia - and, of late, South Korea.

The crisis has forced the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia to seek bail-out loans from the International Monetary Fund under severe financial and monetary conditionalities. The proposal to establish a self-help Asian Fund allegedly to alleviate the crisis will worsen the suffering of the people as it tightens the grip of the IMF, the multinational banks and the imperialist powers on these countries.



US President Bill Clinton, avidly supported by various leaders of the region's client states, is now pressing hard for even further liberalization of financial services and for a Multilateral Agreement on Investments.

With the proven vulnerability to the currency turmoil of the so-called tiger economies, these moves, if pursued, can only spell a deeper crisis for the small member-nations. In turn, it would mean more widespread suffering among the people.

The economic and financial crisis has unmasked the imperialist illusion of a "new world economic order," and therefore confirms the conclusions of the 1996 People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization.

This situation serves to sharpen the contradiction between the oppressed peoples of the world and imperialism even as the imperialist states collude and compete with each other for political and economic hegemony.

We, participants in the 1997 Peoples' Conference Against Imperialist Globalization - Continuing the Resistance in Vancouver, proclaim our unity in opposition to APEC and imperialist globalization. We forge this unity in behalf of our respective working class, peasant and people's organizations, revolutionary and progressive movements, non-government organizations, solidarity groups and networks.

We uncompromisingly reject the APEC, the NAFTA, and the multilateral institutions, the IMF-World Bank and the GATT-WTO, as tools of imperialism in its attempt to further subjugate, exploit and oppress the peoples of the world. Moreover, we resolve to strengthen our opposition and continuing resistance against imperialism and all of its globalization schemes in our respective countries and worldwide in every way and by every means possible.

We recognize that the peoples - that is, excluding the exploiting classes - of both the non-industrialized and industrialized countries suffer in common from imperialist globalization. Their workers, peasants and the population at large are increasingly being deprived not only of jobs, lands incomes and livelihood but also of social services and welfare benefits. This, to ensure the maximum profits for the imperialists. In countries where imperialist globalization takes its heaviest toll, struggles for national liberation and social emancipation are arising, heightening and deepening. In the industrialized countries, the struggles of the working and marginalized peoples to liberate themselves from monopoly-capitalist rule are taking on new heights.

Because the main exploiters and oppressors are the advanced capitalist states and the multinational corporations that they foster and protect, the politically advanced elements -- specifically in the United States and Canada -- have an important task: more vigorously to arouse, organize and mobilize an ever-increasing number of the people towards building a strong anti-imperialist movement in "the belly of the beast." This will forge powerful and indispensable unity with the advancing national liberation movements which deal the heaviest blows against the imperialist world order.