1 Introducing global movements

This book argues that the Globalisation Movement operates as a strange attractor reconfiguring public opposition to global neo-liberalism whilst simultaneously creating 'spaces' where Alternative Globalisation pathways are fused through the multiplicity of engaged actors. This is not an anti-movement, this is not a movement that can be subordinated to national analytical frameworks, this is not a movement that is going to go away. Sociologically this is not a movement that can be engaged with using the standard tool box. This is a network movement actor – or more precisely a network of networks. This is a movement promoting 'the commons' and 'commoners' in North and South through a cumulative process of capacity building that attaches social force to issues normally marginalised in western societies. This movement is a historical iteration of similar forces and concerns that have surfaced periodically for centuries.

This time the movement is millions strong and has mobilised the biggest demonstrations ever witnessed within 'representative' (*sic*) democracies. This is a movement founded in the jungles of Chiapas on principles of inclusion and dialogue, not Jihad as a political strategy, yet it is portrayed as a terrorist front. The movement of movements is portrayed like this as an act of desperation by those who recognise its emergent properties and potential to systematically perturbate dominant discourses and ideologies of neo-liberalism.

Less starkly, this is a movement that prefigures social forms, social processes and social forces which will become normalised as mobility and the information age redistribute the affinities historically associated with space and place. An anatomy of social forms articulating 'interests' which exceed the capacity of 'the system' is discernible within the apparent chaos of the summit sieges best known through the place names Washington, Seattle, Prague, Melbourne, Genoa and Gleneagles.

It is an anatomy even more clearly apparent within the less well-known World Social Forum movement. Combined, these legitimation stripping and proactive capacity-building forces declare the 'other world that *is* possible' and which at times lies surprisingly close to the surface in terms of potentiality. This is a movement pursuing a new cultural politics not a new

political culture, recognising that political offices shape people when divorced from cultural accountability. This is a movement of and from the margins operating in and for itself, rendering tangible a 'planetary action system' by declaring collective stakes obscured by the chimera of individual free choice.

This is the movement that can not only constrain the juggernaut of modernity but reconfigure it and reorientate it – this is the on-going expression of the 'green post-modernism' evoked in the mind of Scot Lash (1990) by events in Leipzig in 1989. To green have been added red, black, pink, orange, and purple as social justice, radical flank, tactical frivolity and populist rejections of 'rigged' elections assert their rights via street presence.

This then is going to be a 'big' book within a 'normal' word limit. It is a book of empirically informed theory or theoretically informed empirical enquiry depending upon one's predilections. Between us we have almost five decades accumulated experience of engagement within, and commentary upon social movements utilising forms of direct action. As privileged participant observers we are more alert to the emergent anatomy we perceive and we would hope therefore, to be better able to discern strengths *and* weaknesses.

As academics, we are profoundly aware that many of the key analytical and conceptual approaches applied to social movement studies are incapable of addressing complex global movement dynamics. We have found the terms 'reflexive framing', 'plateau', 'ecology of action' and 'parallelogram of forces' useful devices through which to understand this emergent, at times bewildering and counter-intuitive, movement milieu and it's relations with 'mainstream' institutions. There is no panacea on offer here, just an opening out onto an immanence fuelled by a widely distributed intensity of feeling sedimented in the daily life of millions of human subjects confronted by 'life in fragments' (Bauman 1995). Portraying how these diverse intensities become mobilised as a common cause, how subjects become actors whilst recognising and respecting difference lies at the heart of our project. We draw on the work of known minoritarian thinkers Gregory Bateson, Alberto Melucci, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and the countless 'unknown' minoritarians encountered through web-lists, social forum events, formal research projects and the social events that constitute the 'movement'.

Whilst this is a terrain littered with complex terms and languages, we endeavour to remain transparent without doing violence to the underlying intellectual and academic stakes. We make no claims to being cognoscenti but regard ourselves as intelligent users attempting to render tangible the processes underlying complex concepts revealing their relevance in a world constituted by tradition, breach and bifurcation.

This is not a definitive account of the actions of the movement (see *Notes from Nowhere* 2003) but an analytical account of the process of emergence, consolidation and extension of a network movement. Our account draws

on cases where we are data rich enabling us to delineate processes which typify the global movement milieu. In effect, we offer a qualitative sociology of the philosophical postulates of *Empire* and *Multitude* advanced by Hardt and Negri (2000, 2004) rendering tangible the agency and constitutive processes immanent within their works. We turn now to outline the key terms and concepts developed substantively in subsequent chapters.

This movement has divided the social movement studies community with major commentators asserting the continued primacy of the nation state as an analytical focus over the less clearly defined global domain. We stand resolutely with the latter trend emphasising the ascendancy of a global institutional nexus exercising a legislative 'trickle down effect' with direct impacts upon the degrees of legislative freedom left open to national polities. Notions of a global hegemony capable of orchestrating this global domain to resonate with its national political and economic interests underestimate the dependency of the sole standing super power upon active alliances (Lawson 2005). Whilst the global nexus remained uncontested, traditional power broker moves remained viable but the contestation of the global institutional domain dating from the 1990s began to render the associated stakes visible to increasingly diverse publics. The degrees of freedom evident at the level of global summitry from the 1980s onwards received their first challenges and checks within the public sphere.

The credibility of global institutions dating from the mid-twentieth century including the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund have all been challenged by unfolding events and the application of social force. Throughout this work we argue that the accretion of social force around these global stakes represents the consolidation of a global civil society/sphere. We render this apparently inchoate process accessible by identifying a nested set of network actors linking together elements of national civil societies from more than one hundred nations within a bottom-up, collectively accountable process of aesthetic expression, interest representation, conflict and collaboration. Together these social forces constitute an 'alternative globalisation movement' with both proactive policy relevant agendas and a processual form consistent with the material conditions characterised by notions of network societies.

This is a landscape inhabited by little-known actors with Peoples Global Action (PGA) and The World Social Forum movement (WSF) being two of the more important network hubs, from and around which cluster geo-regional and city Social Forum movements. This network of networks has the capacity to generate focussed 'plateau events' which simultaneously fuse significant numbers of people around a common aim in single or multiple locations. Whilst mobilisations against the Iraq 'war', various 'trade rounds' and international summits are prominent examples, the pro-active endeavours of the WSF represent a deeper and longer running up-welling of grass roots sensibilities confronted by the retrenchment in social programmes central to the international order. This is a conflict structured

around the meaning of the human species as a zoonpoliticon coming to terms with the fact that human kind has indeed become a force of nature directly influencing the ecological integrity of the planet. Slogans such as 'Kill Capitalism Before It Kills the Planet' are rhetorical expressions of the first 'planetary action system' to assume a tangible social form capable of declaring globally collective stakes whilst asserting the right to 'think local and act global'. The residual and emergent local commons can only be secured at the global level as the misguided decade of thinking global and acting local reveals.

Theoretically we base our stance upon the work of Gregory Bateson, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and Alberto Melucci, minoritarian writers we regard as social complexity theorists (Chesters and Welsh 2005). Deleuze and Guattari, in particular, deploy a lexicon of terms and concepts which are often counter-intuitive and subject to 'conceptual drift or refinement' as their usage develops. We are not concerned here with delineating specific views on precise meanings, interpretations or usages but with rendering tangible some of the key relationships and concepts identified by these writers as material processes. In doing so we trace key terms, such as plateau and framing, back to the work of Bateson and foreground his influence. We in effect argue that globalisation renders the work of Bateson and Deleuze and Guattari more tangible as the importance of material, symbolic, cultural, social and economic flows leave their marks on national societies. What were once thought of as discrete nations are increasingly recognised as 'open systems' in terms of complexity theory just as the 'closed' eco-systems of planet earth are now recognised as 'open systems' by the natural sciences.

The fundamental problematic confronting all social theory involves coming to terms with the global ascendancy of the neo-liberal capitalist axiomatic established in the aftermath of Soviet Communism. The promised end of history (Fukyama 1989) ushering in a coherent unfolding of liberal ascendancy and orthodoxy based on rational market actors has clearly stalled as capital recognises its autonomy from state forms. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the state being confronted by an exterior 'war-machine' becomes more tangible as specific states are required to conform to structural adjustment packages, states become powerless over the images broadcast into their space and when confronted by an increasingly nomadic science which secure atomic weapons for 'rogue states' amidst rationally secure safeguard regimes.

At much more mundane levels the role of the nomad central to Deleuze and Guattari and Melucci (1989) also appears as a tangible emergent social force. Leaving aside deeper theoretical stakes and adopting a more pragmatic stance, these terms *appear* more tangible in 'turbo-capitalisms' neo-liberal phase. As Urry (2000) demonstrates, life has become far more mobile, a mobility constitutive of diasporas of meaning impacting on behavioural patterns. Part of the social complexity of globalisation arises

from the operation of these increasingly nomadic trends as the life-long link between individual/place/country begins to be attenuated: overseas retirement; migration to economies where affordable child support can secure career continuity; educational mobility and web-cam prompted migrations are signs which, should they become trends, will significantly transform the social and the political. Such 'life style' nomadism occurs alongside 'work force' nomadism associated with global labour markets (Obando-Rojas *et al.* 2004) as the mobility of things, people and images intensifies constituting increasingly complex open systems out of once 'closed' national systems (of signification).

Just as national media constituted the nations we all imagined (Anderson 1989) we were part of, global media increasingly constitute the global we imagine we are part of. The *production* of globalisation has both economic and sign value (Lash and Urry 1994) but both are produced through working human agents embodying both the conscious and unconscious mind. The meanings attached to the material products of this process are constituted in multiple competing interpretations. An important part of our argument is that the Alternative Globalisation Movement (AGM) represents the first social expression of a global interpretation from 'below', a social force recognised as potentially 'counter hegemonic' by advocates of 'turbo-capitalism' (see Chapter 3). The multiplicity of actors within the AGM, the explicit attempt to forge a global civil society, the 'North–South' aspirations, and increasing sophistication as a global network agent transcend labour internationalism drawing diverse masses onto the streets far in excess of anything that might result from work place politics short of general strikes. Issues of scale apart we also argue that the AGM both constitutes and taps into an immaterial form of withdrawal (see Chapter 2).

Deterritorialisation

The mobility underpinning these emergent trends reflects the opening up of physical borders through the imperative of deregulation central to the prevailing capitalist axiomatic. This places states in a contradictory location in terms of traditional notions of interest representation. States simultaneously advance the globalisation agenda as the only game in town whilst pledging to pursue the interests of their rapidly changing and diversifying civil societies. The resultant tensions multiply the demands made upon citizens who are increasingly urged to accept the responsibilities and challenges by adopting increasingly flexible and reflexive repertoires of self involving the discerning exercise of increasing choice. The potential coalitions of interests multiply as the once firm boundaries constituting social groups and actors are subject to increasing rapid perturbation as 'All that is solid melts into air'. Under such conditions the notion of planes of immanence introduced by Deleuze and Guatarri assume tangible forms as states and global institutions combine to define globally extensive sets of rule-bound domains

establishing the primacy of the prevailing capitalist axiomatic over local customs, traditions and rules.

Historically this process has been in train since at least the 1980s when Touraine argued that the scientific technocracy once dependent upon the state had become independent of it (Touraine 1983). The nuclear domain was in effect one of the first in which global regulatory reach (Welsh 2000) *had* to be established if the peaceful uses of atomic energy were to be extended to the developing world with the promise of no proliferation of nuclear weapons. The anatomy of global regimes establishing what had to be achieved whilst leaving some variability in how this was to be done within particular countries has subsequently spread to other areas including financial and economic domains. The originating global nexus is constituted by large organisations composed of discrete divisions, which collectively express the potential immanent within each institution. This involves managing sets of social relations: within institutions; between institutions; between governments; finance; banking; media and representatives of national and global civil societies.

Ultimately, the projected potentiality of this global institutional nexus is carefully honed through external relations and marketing divisions to present a positive immanence within the public sphere. This is a process of deterritorialisation which seeks to establish the universal benefits of the prevailing axiomatic removing barriers to its implementation, effectively rendering space a 'smooth' obstacle-free surface. At the meta level deterritorialisation establishes this positive potential as dominant discourses such as 'progress' and 'modernisation'. These discursive surfaces conceal attempts to reassert a degree of control over the process by particular divisions within an institution or efforts of other corporate players to reassert influence by reterritorialising, redefining the associated institutional stakes and identifying new external terrains requiring 'smoothing' by deterritorialisation. The potential emphasised is the win–win face of globalisation as freedom, prosperity, choice and affluence.

Reterritorialisation

Against this deterritorialisation have to be set the roles of pressure groups, consumer societies, unions, social movement organisations (SMOs) social movements and network actors engaged in national and global civil society initiatives. Here, it is perhaps useful to think of the schizophrenia invoked by Deleuze and Guatarri in relation to capitalism in terms of the multiple and conflicting citizenship roles (Turner 2001) expected of individuals under the prevailing axiomatic. The worker, soldier, parent, carer, lover, consumer or homemaker becomes in effect the singularity where these multiple demands and expectations become rendered material in a life. The social and cultural negotiation of the meanings associated with those lives becomes more complex as the amount of time available for such sense

making declines. Confronted by the smooth pace of deterritorialised global regimes of scientific risk regulation and free market accumulation strategies, there are multiple attempts to draw lines in the sand in order to re-establish boundaries, both figurative and literal. The notion of reterritorialisation applies to such attempts to re-appropriate both meaning and influence over the prevailing axiomatic.

As such, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are radical variants of the liberal notions of dis- and re-embedding advanced by Giddens (1990, 1991). Unlike the process of re-embedding, which as Bauman (1993) notes can never completely reinstate that which was dis-embedded, reterritorialisation is not tied to operate within the prevailing axiomatic but is part of a 'war machine' exterior to and antipathetic toward it. It is in this sense that we adopt the language of Deleuze and Guattari to denote a process of emergence operating through and around the AGM as a strange attractor with the potential to reconfigure the prevailing capitalist axiomatic, by constituting a counter-hegemonic social force consolidating bottom-up experience of the fragmentary life imposed by global flows. There are some complex processes of translation involved here which stray far into the fields of discourse, discursive construction, contestation and the formulation of viable collective stakes counterposed to individual free choice models.

It is useful to think of this process of reterritorialisation operating through a range of actors ranging from classically conceived pressure groups, SMOs, to social movements and networks actors such as PGA undertaking 'free acts' (Eve *et al.* 1977). The key process of translation within this linked chain of interest representation involves the rendering of particular interest as general interest through the identification of a 'common enemy' (Castells 1997) and declaration of transcendent symbolic stakes (Melucci 1989, 1996a,b) sufficiently coherent to constitute collective actors from multiple identities. This immediately surpasses social movement theorisations dependent upon the existence of a collective identity – criteria substantively questioned since the 1970s (Stallings 1973).

Whilst pressure groups and SMOs predominantly pursue single issue campaigns, social movement (Welsh 2000, 2002) and network actors (Chesters 2003a, Welsh 2004) not only locate single issues within issue clusters but also situate (territorialise) them in relation to the systematic operation of the prevailing axiomatic. Thus, whilst 'anti-nuclear' movements were incorporated into the political interest representations of developed nations as movements expressing concerns over risks, other concerns over (post)colonial exploitation of uranium, native peoples rights, human rights, civil liberties and a range of gender issues were substantively ignored (Welsh 2001). An important part of our argument here is that network actors such as PGA operate within the intertices of established networks through a rhizomatic constellation of 'actors' whom we term internationals or free radicals.

These critically reflexive individuals follow principles designed to promote non-hierarchical social interaction and negotiation of shared meanings between diverse constituencies. As we argue subsequently, this gives the contemporary AGM more depth and breadth than the 'new left' or 'counter culture' associated with the 1960s as North and South are iteratively networked through recurrent events. In this sense we are arguing that the movement milieu is overcoming the limitations arising from the failure to sediment its aspirations within a viable culture (Lash and Urry 1994). The AGM is predicated upon both virtual and face-work interaction which when combined constitute global flows through the agency of multiple actors. The laminar nature of these flows reflects the growing sophistication and complexity of global movement phenomenon.

Complexity theory

Following the emergence of chaos and complexity theory within the natural science (Chesters 2004b) there has been a steady accumulation of social scientific engagement. This has moved through relevance to quantitative empirical social science (Eve *et al.* 1997, Byrne 1998); metaphorical extension for theory building (Thrift 1999); recognition of emergent social complexity (Urry 2004, Chesters and Welsh 2005) and complexity impacts upon humankind via genomic science (Wynne 2005). This is far from a definitive list but underlying it are a number of points worth elaborating in relation to our earlier remarks about our minoritarian theorists of social complexity.

First, it becomes increasingly clear that the initial conditions of a process or event are 'irrecoverable' but shape subsequent paths and expressive forms. In terms of social theory there are then no founding moments which can be known, but can only be established post-hoc and are always contested. In Deleuzian terms they are particular moments of becoming ossified in time by the attribution of meanings, values and so on. Put another way, founding moments are myths.

Second, as in quantum mechanics, the observer and the observed cannot be detached from one another rendering observation and knowing an *ontological* event. Freedom and free acts become usable terms for science and philosophy. In Deleuzian terms: 'ontology first'.

Third, feedback, particularly iterative forms, enabling a system (social or otherwise) to fold over on itself permits the exhibition of emergent properties and *new* forms of organisation. Some regard the turbulence of feedback as primary and the material and abstract laws of science as secondary reflections. In Deleuzian terms 'nomad science' maintains a commitment to becoming whilst 'royal science' ossifies becoming in disciplinary laws.

Fourth, that the appearance of order on the edge of chaos is not confined to natural systems such as tectonic plates storing latent energy which is released cataclysmically but applies equally to the perpetuation of established

notions of social order through systemic institutional dominance. In Deluzian terms then, social movements are rendered as a nomadic war machine of renewal.

Fifth and finally, qualitative sociology has always argued that society is the product of an almost infinite myriad of individual interactions. Given this, micro changes in the rules and conventions shaping social interaction can have enormous amplitude. In Deluzian (2004) terms difference is determinate in the final instance. (After Eve *et al.* 1997: xi–xxvii, 269–280.)

The interactionist insight mentioned in the final point is *not* an adequate explanatory device in terms of the systemic, collective syncopation of the myriad individual micro changes evoked, however. This involves processes of conscious rational strategy, subjective sensibilities and unconscious aspirations which we address in subsequent chapters through a conceptual cluster of 'reflexive framing', 'plateau' and 'ecology of action' developed since 2000 (Chesters and Welsh 2002, 2004, 2005, Chesters 2003a, Donson *et al.* 2004, Welsh 2004).

Reflexive framing

Reflexive framing refers to the sense-making practices of actors necessary to situate themselves in relation to a domain. In face-work situations this is a complex process utilising all the human senses to process multiple signals in the context of the observers' pre-established knowledge(s), predispositions and prevailing subjective state. The advent of Computer Mediated Communications (CMC) significantly alters the framing capacities of actors (individual and collective) and academic researchers. The capacity to record, review, re-sequence, retrieve, time shift and 're-perform' events marks, we argue, a significant shift in the representational sophistication of the movement milieu, the degree of 'connectivity' possible between movement actors and some erosion of the historic disparity in surveillance between the security state and activists (see Chapter 3).

Reflexive framing is a means of analytically addressing actors' increasing engagement with the global in the context of emergent 'planetary action systems' (Melucci 1996a) – a process distinct from national frame alignment within established political opportunity structures. Reflexive framing also marks a departure from dominant sociological uses of 'reflexivity' and 'reflexive' associated with Beck, Giddens and Lash (1994) which in different ways, operationalise the term in relation to 'knowledge' and knowledge processing practices (Welsh 2000: 20–26). Whilst Lash recognises the importance of aesthetic registers in the mimetic process constituting critical reflection this is a 'second moment', which leaves cognitive processes in a position of primacy (McKechnie and Welsh 2002). Reflexive framing addresses the ontological nature of cognition by recognising the importance of aesthetic primacy. Beyond this, aesthetic registers are

expressions of 'identity' or 'self' communicative competences which become vital in contexts lacking a common language (Chapter 3).

Methodologically 'images' of such interaction raise issues of interpretation and analysis which the extension of the term 'text', common within media and cultural studies, to visual media belies. In intellectual terms Derrida's assertion that nothing exists outside of text begins to be attenuated by the capacity to produce multi-media recordings evocative of a range of responses independent of a reader's capacity to engage with text as grammar, syntax and so on. There is a spectral immediacy and audible amplification of context in digital video capture (through off picture sound, for example) which it is difficult to reduce to text (Chesters 2000).

The availability and portability of CMC also democratises genres which have tended to be the preserve of the 'great and the good'. The 'bi-opic' mixture of personal narrative, life experience and reflection upon events and issues is no longer the preserve of senior political figures but a mode of expression widely available. Political minders and press officers are well aware of the impact that media portrayals have upon the sense of 'self' of their charges. Reflexive framing recognises the individual and collective significance of a range of media portrayals within the movement milieu. Compared to the mainstream political milieu where media prominence reinforces the 'me, my, I' ego-certainty of politicians, we argue that the movement media milieu militates against this through careful attention to process and the availability of sanctions consistent with underlying principles (Chapter 6). As such reflexive framing is a necessary condition for the constitution of plateaux of resistance, creative expression of the emergent parallelograms of forces (Chapter 7) and the praxis associated with the ecology of action while founding a 'planetary action system' (Chapter 8).

These claims are explored in subsequent chapters but their theoretical antecedents are addressed here for the theoretically inclined. This involves an outline account of the relationship between British social-anthropologist Gregory Bateson, US interactionist Ervin Goffman, and the Italian social movement theorist Alberto Melucci, and opens out to the relevance of Deleuze and Guatarri (Chesters and Welsh 2005).

Bateson: applying frames at home

Bateson (1973/78) was one of the first anthropologists to recognise the analytical importance of culture, cultural codes, practices and customs 'at home' in order to render visible the embedded 'habits of mind' (Bateson's term for a paradigm) blunting social, political and policy 'flexibility' in the face of change. This move reflected his sensitivity to the initial 'modern' formalisation of environmental concerns including climate change and his lifelong engagement with systemic processes of change rather than replication. Bateson identified the dominance of: us *against* the environment; other

people the primacy of the sub-global actors (e.g. me, my firm, my nation etc); control over the environment; perpetual belief in the frontier mentality; economic determinism and reliance on technology as key elements of the habit of mind to be avoided (Bateson 1973/78: 468).[1] This dominant habit of mind was so dangerous as to threaten the future of human civilisation.

Against this Bateson advocated an 'ecological habit of mind' based in the acceptance of a universal human subject interacting with both social and natural realms,[2] arguing 'that we should trust no policy decisions which emanate from persons who do not yet have that habit' (1973/78: 437). Bateson's postulated Ecology of Mind is complex and this has no doubt contributed to the paucity of commentary upon his thinking within the social movement literature. Another factor here is that many of the emergent processes addressed by Bateson have taken decades to assume recognisable material forms and expressions, a process significantly enhanced by the post-cold war re-deployment of technical monitoring techniques from military to environmental 'targets'.

Bateson builds a model of human behaviour far more complex than rational actor models by melding cognitive capacities and process within the affective domain that is emotion. In so doing he argues that the signs and symbols associated with formal rationality are cultural criteria selected on the basis of affective aesthetic preferences. He thus warns against accepting the formal logic of any culture or civilisation as expressed in 'hard laws', noting that such laws ossify past frames and preferences as strengths masking their transformation into weakness under changed material circumstances. To Bateson such transitions, or phase shifts, tend to be obscured by behavioural science's pre-occupation with establishing universal constants and laws equivalent to units of measurements such as mass and length within the physical sciences.

Against this, he argues for a model within which energy plays a central part in determining human behaviour. Energy is used in a variety of senses by Bateson from notions of metabolism (1973/78: 28) to more emotional states of being that become patterned through culture representing 'the emotional setting of all the details of behaviour'. The affective domain is thus perceived as central to 'satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the individuals' in a group (1973/78: 39).[3] Collectively this gives rise to an ethos 'a culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and emotions of the individuals' (1973/78: 81).[4]

Bateson argued that 'a sense of individual autonomy, a habit of mind somehow related to what I have called *free will*, is an essential of democracy' (1973/78: 138).[5] This corresponds closely with the sociological importance subsequently attributed to 'free acts' within complexity theory (Eve *et al.* 1997). For Bateson individual 'free will' becomes aggregated into collective cultural forms through acts of communication constituting shared meaning and solidarity. Bateson emphasises the increasing sophistication of human communication that subordinates responses to hard-wired,

chemical messengers (such a pheromones) to the socially selected 'mood signs of another' (such as perfume). Individuals become aware of such communicative signs as a signal 'which can be trusted, distrusted, falsified, denied, amplified, corrected and so forth' (1973/78: 151). Bateson thus lays the foundations for Goffman's subsequent notions of 'natural' and 'social' frames and the process of keying and re-keying frames within a 'strip of activity' (Goffman 1974/86). Bateson's notion of communication is central to our use of reflexive framing and it is to this we now turn.

Bateson: communication as multi-layered activity

Bateson emphasises the range of communicative means at human disposal, the variability within each and the limits of both textual forms and linguistic structures. Communication is regarded as a multi-layered activity containing both substantive rational meaning and effect. Tone of voice, pace of delivery, rhythm, accompanying facial expression and so on are vital components of the communicative process shaping behavioural responses by stimulating energy. Word and text apart he recognised that 'our iconic communication serves functions totally different from those of language and, indeed, performs functions which verbal language is unsuited to perform', commenting that 'The logician's dream that men should communicate only by unambiguous digital signals has not come true and is not likely to' (1973/78: 388). Given the centrality of communication to individual framing and group cohesion it thus follows that *an adequate theory and empirical means of investigating social movement framing cannot rely on textual sources alone[6] and must endeavour to engage with the multi-layered nature of the framing process as it occurs in specific sites and across time.*

The importance of this approach to framing is extended by Bateson, via Kant, to argue that the primary 'aesthetic act is the selection of a fact' (1973/78: 456) which he combines with Jungian insights to argue that the recognition of 'difference', vital to the identification of fact, 'is an idea' (1973/78: 457). The maintenance of healthy homeostatic systems thus become crucially linked to difference, the ability to communicate difference, to recognise and respond to difference for Bateson.[7] Bateson's pre-occupation with this complex terrain arises from his scepticism of political, administrative and economic elites with immensely powerful technologies and techniques at their disposal to recognise and optimise systemic collective interests due to their pre-occupation with entrenched 'facts' (e.g. the primacy of economic growth) selected on the basis of entrenched 'habits of mind'. Bateson underlined this point via the deeply sedimented Darwinian notion of the survival of the fittest, complete with its implicit separation between organism and eco-system. Against this he posited the obvious wisdom that 'The unit of survival is *organism* plus *environment*. We are learning by bitter experience that the organism which destroys its environment destroys itself' (1973/78: 459).[8]

Bateson's take on framing then, is a wide-ranging and systemic one that relates to both individual processes of psychological framing and the collective consequences of these frames in selecting certain differences as categories of fact that structure human activity on the basis of both cognitive and affective processes. His commitment to anthropology at home led him to identify the importance of groups with distinct (sub)cultural identities as bearers of 'an ecology of mind' capable of recognising and reconnecting feedback loops necessary to break the negative impacts of the 'habits of mind' dominant within the prevailing political opportunity structures.

His limited prescriptive thoughts in this area included holistic philosophies eschewing the dualism between 'man' and nature and mobilisations against the Vietnam War. Areas where Bateson is substantially silent include the question of how groups communicating important messages promoting flexibility can be recognised and their 'signal' differentiated from the background noise. It is in this sense that we seek to develop an 'ecology of action' to compliment Bateson's 'ecology of mind'. For our present purposes we use Bateson's work as recounted here to concentrate upon a frame as:

1   An individual sense-making activity establishing a level of abstraction that leaves them ontologically comfortable and able to be an actor in a given situation.
2   A sense-making device that can be communicated through a variety of human expressive media.
3   That can only be *fully* comprehended by exposure to the relevant range of communicative signals.
4   The basis of forms of social solidarity.

We now turn to explore the implications of our reading of Bateson for Goffman's development of frame analysis and its application within the field of social movement studies.

Goffman, frame analysis and movements

Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974/86) is the subject of a formidable secondary literature. After acknowledging Bateson, Goffman denotes frame as 'definitions of a situation' being built up 'in accordance with principles of organization – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them'; applying the term frame to refer to such of these basic elements 'as I am able to identify' (1974/86: 10–11). Frame analysis is 'a slogan to refer to the examination in these terms of the organization of experience' but was 'too removed from fieldwork' (1974/86: 13). It is worth dwelling on what is subsumed under the words 'as I am able to identify' as a way of making some general points.

Frame Analysis draws on a wide range of forms of interaction including press articles, personal interactions and 'out of frame' events. As such it is part of a US-based formalisation of issues and stakes addressed through French 'high theory' and modern forms of discourse and conversational analysis.[9] Compared to Bateson's pre-occupation with systemic social processes of framework Goffman focuses upon individual sense making, noting the importance of sight as a form of 'quick framing' subordinating other senses (1973/78: 146). When events are rendered in terms of established frames Goffman notes that 'time often seems to drop out or collapse' when compared to the frames of those engrossed in a realm of activity where 'events unfold over time' leading to 'an outcome' (1973/78: 46). Despite his primary concern with individual sense making, Goffman's text is littered with unspecified collectivities, with 'we' and 'our society' being prominent forms, who have to choose between multiple framings of particular 'strips of activity'. These are choices between competing meanings involving 'keying' and 're-keying' which can include 'replicative records of events' (1973/78: 68), with audio and video recording having 'expanded the use of documentation' (69).

Video capture enters Goffman's schema as a new and relatively limited form of documentation akin to 'news reel footage' and documentary television output – not a ubiquitous, mundane technology. In this context Goffman's frequent invocation of visual examples from film, theatre and stage as indicators of power relations expressed in terms of both spatial designations of status (e.g. actor/audience) and attributed meaning *requires* extension. The recognition given to the potential for play and playfulness (1973/78: 45–55) and theatrical performance (1973/78: 124 et. seq.) as means of 're-keying' a set of established frames or meanings is another important area. Towards the end of *Frame Analysis*, Goffman reflects that every definition of a situation presupposes and banks upon an 'array of motivational forces' which through 'extreme measures...seems to be disruptable'. To be able to alter this balance sharply at will is to exercise power (Goffman 1974/86: 447).

Our strong case is that the AGM has exercised such power against the institutions of global neo-liberalism through an effective siege of the signs utilising play, theatrical performance and the mundane presence of CMC constitutive of plateaux of resistance maintained through an ecology of action which introduces, amongst other things, an iterative element to the framing process. We thus depart decisively from established uses of frame and framing within the social movement literature by melding Bateson and Goffman in an entirely novel manner. It is important to clarify this meld before formally addressing our substantive difference with established framing approaches.

Goffmans' appropriation of Bateson departs from his formulation in several important respects. Whilst Bateson prioritised the systemic social and cultural importance of framing, Goffman's emphasis remained limited

to the individual and experiential. Whilst Goffman emphasised the importance of an 'outcome', Bateson prioritises the suspension of outcome prioritising the maintenance of intensity through 'process' (central to our use of plateau). Whilst Goffman's term 'strip of activity', and many of his examples, imply a short *duree* we define reflexive framing as an iterative collective process extending over at least a decade. While Goffman notes the importance of recording techniques for the negotiation of 'factual' accounts defining situations, we will engage with digital recording media as means of perturbating established habits of mind associated with prevailing political opportunity structures – the exercise of grass roots power by 'normal run of the mill folk' acting collectively but not in unison.

Re-framing framing: or life after master frames

This section rehearses our key points of departure from a substantive literature. As such, this is a truncated account for the purposes of clarity of exposition rather than a detailed engagement. Zirakzadeh (2000) emphasises the marked disparity between social movement analysts' uses of frame and those of Goffman emphasising Goffman's insistence on the ubiquitous nature of frames, framing processes and the capacity of all citizens to frame events. The issue of substance here is that the attribution of frame generation to special categories such as 'movement intellectuals' overlooks the framework of 'ordinary participants', a view shared by numerous commentators (e.g. Fischer 1997, Tesh 2000, Kenney 2002, Chesters and Welsh 2004). We also share Fischer's view that the framing literature lacks any clear agreement about what a frame is, how a frame is identified, recognised or used (Fischer 1997: 2), that the boundary between frames and other elements of discourse has become blurred (1997: 5), and that key scholars do not make plain how they analytically identify frames (1997: 6). Subsequent attempts to clarify the relationship between frame, ideology and discourse remain inconclusive and contradictory (see Chapter 3).

Academically we would identify the attempt to meld various competing schools of social movement thought through a unitary definition (Diani 1992) as particularly significant here. Frame analysis was initially applied to social movements by Snow *et al.* (1986) in a seminal paper addressing US SMOs. The dominance of pluralist models of interest representation and inclusion within the United States are significant features of all established US approaches. These have orientated resources and frame-work towards a prevailing national political opportunity structure. An important point of departure here is that *our work deals with network actors* (Castells 1996, Jordan 1998, Wall 1999) *intervening at the global level not social movement organisations intervening at a national level.*

Second, the development of frame analysis proceeded by identifying types of frame conducive to movement efficacy. Here the notions of 'master' and

'grievance' frames were central in setting SMOs on the path towards realisable ends within a *national polity*. Movement goals are thus addressed in terms such as 'frame alignment', 'frame resonance', 'amplification' and so on. These developments argued explicitly *against* adopting abstract master frames such as capitalist inequality on the grounds that these could not be transformed in credible grievance frames capable of resonance and amplification. Empirically, we are arguing here that the AGM has prioritised a neo-liberal capitalist axiomatic as its 'master frame' and successfully mobilised millions of people in hundreds of countries on this basis. Theoretically we are arguing that the global level of contestation has become key and cannot simply be dismissed by the reassertion of national primacy (Tarrow 2004).

Third, political opportunity structure approaches emphasise action through existing 'strong channels' neglecting the significance of Granovetter's (1973) seminal paper *'The Strength of Weak Ties'*. Summarised somewhat brutally, this paper argues that the diffusion of information across a society occurs most effectively through 'weak ties... between *different* small groups' (Granovetter 1973: 1376), that networked word of mouth is central in moving people to act upon issues reported in mainstream media and in the attribution of trust to individuals in positions of leadership (1973: 1374).[10] Understood in this way apparently marginal actors assume a position of considerable transformatory potential within and beyond networked societies via CMC (see also Castells 1996).

Fourth, that in a global world of more or less real time media coverage the 'symbolic multipliers' generated through such weak ties raise problems of legitimacy for both political leaders and global institutions. The 'compulsory visibility' and the 'new and distinctive fragility' of political leaders noted by Thompson (1995: 141) have been intensified by the exercise of movement re-framing 'power' in Goffman's sense (see also Chapter 3). These are all points implicit in the work of Melucci to whom we now turn to develop this anatomy of reflexive framing further.

Melucci and planetary action systems

The late Alberto Melucci (1989) represented the last significant European movement theorist explicitly challenging the established American schools outlined earlier on several grounds. Whilst his later work attempted to find some common ground (Melucci 1996a,b) one of us has argued elsewhere that this was ultimately incommensurable with his wider objectives (Welsh 2000). Here it is worth underlining the reductive impact of both master and grievance frames within national systems of political interest representation and their related inability to extend to global levels of analyses. Melucci's invocation of 'planetary action systems' raises important issues for movement engagement at a global level. Underlying Melucci's criticisms of

established approaches are a range of factors which can be usefully addressed through the notion of immaterial interests.

This is an area attracting increasing attention from diverse perspectives' including concerns with immaterial labour (Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004) and more abstract philosophical formulations such as those of Lyotard (2004). It is our contention that Melucci, alone amongst social movement theorists, developed an analytical and interpretive schema with the sophistication and flexibility to combine these diverse concerns. Notions of immaterial labour revolve around the necessity of formalising one's personal attributes in terms of emergent labour market conditions requiring collaborative team working characteristics, networking and presentational skills in the production of 'immaterial' goods. The emergence of the information society and knowledge economy create a new subjectivity incorporating work(non)place skills within the private sphere constituting both a generalised intellect and disciplinary fear structured through flexible labour markets (Gorz 1999). To Hardt and Negri the techniques of self associated with immaterial labour are simultaneously the tools of radical transformation which 'the multitude' can now target directly at the global institutional nexus constituting 'Empire' (Hardt and Negri 2004).

Lyotard's concerns are much broader relating to the integrity of the planet upon which all life is dependent and which has become a global laboratory for scientific appropriation and economic utilisation. Orientations towards a future holding the long-term prospect of planetary extinction when the sun loses its integrity becomes a significant question for Lyotard. This philosophical concern can be rendered more tangible by addressing issues of inter-generational equity made increasingly prominent through environmentalist's interventions. The unborn are immaterial beings yet there are interests centrally important to these nascent humans with clean air, water, food and viable cultures being obvious examples. Those alive can attempt to address such immaterial needs, though doing so means abandoning certain habits of mind. Whilst more tangible, such issues remain complex and lead back to fundamental questions related to the meaning of life and human beingness. The prospect of genetic selection and human enhancement raised by genomic science intensify and extend these concerns which are in the process of being rendered as material choices within a neo-liberal eugenic axiomatic (Habermas 2003). The increasing attention to post-human, cyborg futures reflect the early material cultural capacities constituting the immaterial (Haraway 1999).

In Melucci's terms, person and planet are increasingly rendered as information through self-organising systems understood in terms of cybernetics but which simultaneously code symbolic stakes. Central here are certain stakes which *require* collective reflection as the neo-liberal axiomatic of individual choice embeds asymmetrical power relations, effectively sequestering choice and allocating it to profit orientated market

forces. For Melucci these collective stakes are declared by movements acting as 'prophets' (McKechnie and Welsh 2002).

'Social movements act as signals to remind us that both the external planet, the Earth as our homeland, and the internal planet, our "nature" as human beings, are undergoing radical transformations' (Melucci 1996a: 7).

For Melucci a pre-occupation with the impact of movements upon prevailing political systems and policies diverts attention away from their role in the 'production of cultural codes' which 'is the principle activity of the hidden networks of contemporary movements' (1996a: 6). This process constitutes a cultural politics rather than a political culture signifying a transformation of both the form and content of political life pursued by 'man' (*sic*) as Marx's ultimate 'zoon politicon' – or political animal. The established dualisms 'producer/consumer', 'capitalist/worker', which structured political institutions and systems are 'breached', as the systemic effects of conflicts organised around these cultural codes produce no outright winners, offering a future of longer working hours and an extended working life.

The stresses and strains associated with the increasingly visible connections between material affluence, environmental degradation and self-betterment are rendered tangible via sensitised individuals whom Melucci encountered as a practising therapist. Like Goffman and framing, much of Melucci's writing was rather removed from field work and an important element of this work is to redress this imbalance by demonstrating the kinds of reflexive framing encountered within the AGM. Here, we find reflexive actors recognising the inescapable presence of difference transcending the old binary opposites underpinning the liberal social democratic polity and pursuing ways of achieving unity in diversity. Their success in rendering visible previously immaterial issues is underpinned by Melucci's recognition of movement as media (1996a: 36) a point developed by Atton (2002). This leads naturally into a consideration of the use of CMC and the virtual domain as a field of co-operation and conflict through which network actors engage with a global power nexus.

Movement as media

The idea that movement are media is important for our notion of reflexive framing on a number of grounds. Goffman insists that bystanders become 'deeply involved' (1974/86: 36) by events they witness. This involvement is particularly complex in the context of theatrical performance where 'multi-channel effects' (1974/86: 146) encode multiple layers of meaning *initially* appropriated by visual fast framing. Melucci's recognition of movement as media opens up the potential for movement to directly channel meaning through lifestyle encoding (social frames and prompts) and by staged acts of intervention. This is a very different sense of media relations to that developed within POS approaches where movement impact is

assessed primarily through representation within mainstream media channels, leading Gamson to portray movement activists as 'media junkies' (1995: 85).

Whilst an orientation towards established media forms is one *part* of AGM strategy it is no longer an adequate representation of the totality of movement media activities. CMC have enabled 'autonomous' vehicles such as Indymedia with permanent and dialogical web presence accessible via the World Wide Web. This 'upper-echelon' enables the mounting of images and text from movement events around the world. These images and reports become discursive surfaces which are then dialogically engaged within on-going chatrooms and e-mail lists. This is a process of actively negotiated meaning constitutive of affinity, belonging and community through which multiple individual sensitivities to emergent stakes are consolidated into shared meanings between multiple identities. This virtual domain is widely portrayed as 'democratic' and presented as a metaphorical descriptor of network structures and the 'smooth space' enabling activists to strike directly at the heart of 'Empire' (Hardt and Negri 2004).

The representation of the virtual domain as inherently democratic smooth space is an over-extension ignoring not only issues of network access but also the constraints imposed via system architecture through search, access and surveillance protocols embedded in 'the machine'. The idea that the virtual domain transcends and renders irrelevant national borders is both true and false at one and the same time. Halivais's (2000) survey of the geographical locations of domain names and hyperlink connections to sites outside the national borders of the host domain revealed that the United States hosts almost 70% of domain names and the lowest proportion of hyperlinks to domains outside national borders (9%) (see also Castells 1996: 345–358). Whilst the tendency for hyperlinks to remain within host nations' boundaries is replicated in other countries, links to US domains represent the majority of extra-territorial traffic. Thus whilst the web represents a rhizomatic network structure the 'social borders have their own cartographies' (Harvey 1996: 282).

Halvais concludes by noting Simmel's (1955) point that groups based on shared interests would tend to replace groups based on physical proximity whilst emphasising that the web is relatively young. This is consistent with work on small world networks and we approach the AGM as a diverse interest group whose use of the web represents an exemplar of the kinds of intended and targeted impacts achievable by distributed network actors. As we show in Chapters 3 and 4, the role of social networks constituted and consolidated via mobility, by internationals or free radical within the AGM, do play a significant role here. These roles do not however simply replicate the dominance of frame-work by movement intellectuals but, through adherence to underlying principles originating in the geographical 'South', focus on maintaining an open process – a defining feature of multitude (see Hardt and Negri 2004: 99–105). From the 1990s onwards hacktivism

and access denial protests have featured prominently within the activist milieu with many interventions supporting 'Southern' causes.

These points are important for reflexive framing because the multiple acts of laminated communication undertaken by the AGM as a media form are acts of de- and re-territorialisation of both the virtual and physical realms at both global and national levels. The World Wide Web and inter-networking are in their infancy and will undoubtedly develop in surprising and counter-intuitive ways. We are suggesting that the AGM illustrates and pre-figures part of that potential, introducing the possibility of decentralisation and forms of choice which initial US dominance appears to preclude. For present purposes, the role of CMC and reflexive framing in constituting such multi-layered decisional fora is pursued through the notion of plateau used in this work.

Plateaux, ecology of action and parallelogram of forces

> A plateau is always in the middle [*milieu*], not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus…We call a 'plateau' any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome.[11]
>
> (Deleuze and Guatarri 2002: 21–23)

The notion of rhizome advanced here is at once redolent of the contemporary use of network society (Castells 1996) and the embodiment within this term of a number of previous terms such as social network analyses and actor network theory/ies (Latour 1996, 1999, 2004, Law and Hassard 1999). All are descriptors for sets of relations involving agency between the mechanical/ artifactual and the social. There are some important caveats to this analogy, however. Network has a connotation of fixed lines of communication or connection bounded in closed conduits. Network analyses typically represent findings diagrammatically depicting linkages and frequencies of interactions between identified and known parties. The rhizomatic differs in that it 'operates by variation, expansion conquest, capture, offshoots' (Deleuze and Guattari 2002: 21) it is this malleability and innovative potential that suggest the importance of the 'strength of weak ties' (Granovetter 1973). Part of our argument is that the AGM is a rhizomatic social form constituting a multitude as a proactive mass movement through the active recognition of difference and singularities capable of constituting plateaux.

Deleuze and Guatarri's use of plateau is derived from Gregory Bateson (1973) where it denotes a sustained plane of intensity not intended to result in any form of climactic outcome or pre-ordained conscious dénouement. Our use of the term plateau is consistent with this despite the presence of declared objectives associated with plateaux such as 'summit sieges' (Chesters 2004a, Chesters and Welsh 2004). To be absolutely clear on this

point we distinguish between these acts of 'declaratory posture' and the deeper underlying commitment to specific processes within the AGM. This processual approach is *our* elaboration of 'genealogical method' prioritised by Deleuze and Guattari. Methodologically we thus engage with social movement plateaux not as single time point events associated with mobilisation cycles but as iterative stabilisations of rhizomatic forces in which a fluid, nomadic social force engages with both state forms and global institutions. In terms of engagement with these exterior forces, this is both defensive, in the sense of protecting preferred 'life-worlds', and offensive in prioritising 'other life-worlds'. In terms of internal dynamics, there is both co-operation and conflictual contestation.

Collectively reflexive framing, CMC, face-work exchanges and the iterative refinements produced through plateaux constitute an ecology of action which translates the combination of aesthetic preferences, interests and their attendant symbolic stakes and cultural codes into a planetary action system. We argue that this constitutive process operates as a parallelogram of forces aligning multiple lines of f(l)ight through which *multitudes* engage not only directly with the global institutional nexus of *Empire* but also at the multiplicity of institutional locations – *empires* if you will – constituting the axiomatic. These are themes we return to in Chapters 7 and 8. The network of networks underpinning this argument did not just emerge pre-formed on the streets of Seattle in 1999 but consolidated throughout the decade. Some sense of the precursors and prefigurative events is important in understanding the resultant meld of 'South' and 'North' and it is to this that we now turn.