

blur

how the network paradigm gives social movements the upper hand



by jason adams

“Postmodern war’s incredible instability is both a tremendous danger and a utopian possibility.”

- Chris Hables Gray

*“No military on earth can go toe-to-toe with the U.S. armed forces.
But no hierarchy on earth can keep up with a well-functioning network.”*

- Business 2.0

I. Introduction to the Network Paradigm

Though it is relatively little understood by the general population, since the 1970s there has been a major paradigm shift in the general human understanding of the world around us. This shift is one away from the Newtonian mechanistic worldview that held that the different aspects of society could be abstracted and observed in isolation. In turn it is one towards the Kuhnian ecological or “network” worldview in which a balance of interconnectedness and autonomy are understood as the lens through which to more lucidly analyze and organize society. The theory of “swarm intelligence” as articulated by the Santa Fe Institute describes the overall principle at work here, which is that “the emergent collective intelligence of groups of simple agents...replaces control, preprogramming and centralization” (Bonabeau, 1999, p. xi). This shift is not simply occurring in one distinct field or in the muddled minds of a few obscure physicists; rather, it is pervasive and fundamentally alters all sectors of society; from business to terrorism, from militarism to activism and from government administration to criminal activity. The massive vacuum that has emerged as a result is sucking into it all of the old mechanistic political traditions; from liberalism to fascism, from imperialism to anarchism and from capitalism to communism. In their place, new hybridized political theories and organizational structures are emerging, with a tendency toward emphasizing a balance of interconnectedness and autonomy.

Paradoxically, these epistemological shifts offer less of the mediocrity of “business-as-usual” and more of the extreme possibilities of either global catastrophe or global utopia; as power simultaneously migrates above and below the nation-state level to form globally networked constellations of both elite formations and grassroots movements in global civil society, a process that I will refer to as “horizontalization.” The process of horizontalization is one in which former concepts of left and right and even of top and bottom begin to disintegrate, fading into uselessness as the boundaries separating them blur together in every conceivable way. In this ongoing process however, a complex web of influence is emerging in which a global administrative “supernetwork” (GAS), a network of networks, is developing in one interwoven cluster and a global social supernetwork (GSS) is developing in another; these two are amongst several other clusters that are not examined in detail here.

First we will look at how this shift is affecting the GAS. In this cluster, horizontalization is officially described as the “transformation” of strictly hierarchical business, government, law enforcement, and military organizational structures to a hybridized, uneven “spiders-web” of both networks and hierarchies to form an “objective force.” In business for instance, there has been a shift from the Fordist industrial model of hierarchical command and self-contained production combined with strong unions and secure jobs to the post-Fordist network-centric model of “teamwork” command and outsourced production combined with “flexible” temporary labor and just-in-time production linked through an integrated system that begins with the point-of-sale scanner.

In the military there has been a shift self-described as “breaking the bureaucracy” in which the entire apparatus is moving away from large-scale battalion-based warfare characteristic of the World Wars and the Cold War to mid-sized, platoon-based “Initial Brigade Combat Teams” (ICBTs), developed specifically to engage in 21st century network-centric warfare. The 15-year transformation to ICBTs will be characterized by an ever-increasing reliance on information technology, decentralized “commander’s intent” rather than direct command and an ability to enforce “objective” hegemony worldwide within 96 hours. This is reflected as well within law enforcement and intelligence organizations that are moving towards network forms as well, such as the current drive to horizontalize decision-making in the FBI by allowing directors of local field offices to open up major investigations without clearance from the central office. And on the level of government, there is a shift away from the “imperialism” model of colonizer-states and colonized-states and towards an “Empire” network-centric model in which there is an ever-encroaching third-worldization of sections of the first world combined with a more limited first-worldization of sections of the third world.

The strategic golden thread that interweaves the business, military, law enforcement, intelligence and government into such a seamless, tight cluster is that of “jurisdictional blurring” utilized in order to more completely control diverse situational outcomes. This blurring is represented in the current drive to more fully integrate the CIA, FBI and Executive Branch of government as much as it is in the “community policing” concept which attempts to blur the boundaries between civilians and law enforcement. Another good example is the Bush Administration’s current drive to push “preemptive strikes” against would-be terrorists; which blurs the boundaries between offense and defense. For the first world all of this means an increasing militarization, destabilization, infantilization and depoliticization of everyday life in all of its aspects. In the former third world it means that a small group of elites is supported in creating a small comfort zone for themselves, their family and friends which leads them to defend that newly acquired power by willfully participating in the GAS. While an increased ability to use brute force to maintain hegemony is one result of this transformation, the ultimate goal is that discipline will become internalized on all levels of society, ultimately legitimizing beyond possible critique the illegitimate authority held by the GAS.

At the other end of the spectrum is the social shift to the network paradigm embodied in the GSS; as in the GAS, this is characterized by a blurring of the boundaries that at one time were the very definition of the difference between its diverse constituent sectors. For instance the longstanding differences that have separated movements based on the “polar opposites” of global and local, autonomy and solidarity, reform and revolution, nonviolent and violent, and lifestyle and resistance have all been blurred in the most successful of the newly emerging social movements such as the Argentina rebellion, the Zapatista uprising and the ongoing antiglobalization movement. In addition “jurisdictional” distinctions are increasingly blurred as more and more movements begin to realize that labor and the environmental struggles cannot be separated, that indigenous sovereignty and women’s movements cannot be separated and that food sovereignty and antiracist struggles cannot be separated. Another thing that the GSS and GAS have in common is their common links into various terrorist and criminal networks such as Al-Qaeda, the Russian Mafiyas, Hamas and the Latin King and Queen Nation, all for varying reasons and to varying degrees depending on the node or cluster of the network being examined.

Despite the pervasive commonality in the factors underlying the shift in both the GAS and the GSS, one key difference is that social movements have a network capability far greater than the administrative apparatus will ever have. Added to this is the fact that the trajectory of horizontalization for the GAS is somewhere between 15 and 30 years; the GSS is already there right now, even if there are more branches into which the process could still be extended. It is precisely this that is the saving grace of the social movements; because as insignificant as this single

fact may seem on its own, what it ultimately means is that the GSS will always inherently have the potential to out-organize and overpower the GAS regardless of how repressive it becomes, since there will always be more of us than there will be of them. The strategic question that arises then, is how do we consciously structure the GSS in such a way that it will attain optimum capability? That is the subject of this essay, which will examine several major themes including 1) the underlying structure of both global and local supernetworks 2) those characteristics which extend the capabilities of the GSS above and beyond those of the GAS 3) an examination of the solidification of the GSS in the largely successful global WTO insurrections of late 1999 and 4) a list of conclusions and implications for the future trajectory of the GSS that can be drawn from the synthesis of the preceding three themes.

II. Elements of Emergent Social Supernetworks

Social supernetworks have emerged as a direct result of the epistemological shift to the network paradigm in the whole of society; this is because the foundations of our general knowledge of reality have a dramatic and far-reaching effect on the subsequent development of the many dimensions of the society in which we are situated. So for instance, if we were currently living in 14th century England, since it was generally accepted at that time and place that the world was flat, this severely limited that society's understanding of the nature of the rest of the world, which in practical terms meant that the English were a very inwardly focused people at the time. Likewise, when it was finally discovered that this was not the case, the world quickly became subject to emergent global imperialist ventures, mass annihilations of native peoples and other atrocities in the mad rush to master the newly understood geography. This is what is happening with the network paradigm; as the mechanistic worldview has been abandoned by wider and wider sectors of global society, there is an all-level race to master the newly emergent social and administrative geography. We have already explored some of the ways in which this is occurring in the administrative supernetworks; now we will consider how this has shaped the emergent social supernetworks, examining in detail the nature of their underlying structures and how their best aspects be emphasized to the optimum benefit of grassroots social change movements invested in the larger GSS.

There are three major types of analyses that have been applied to the study of these supernetworks. The first type are those analyses that are focused primarily on the qualitative organizational characteristics of the supernetworks, as is the "SPIN" (Segmented, Polycentric, Integrated Network) analysis, developed by Luther Gerlach in the 1970s. The second type are those centered on strategic characteristics that successful SPINs tend to adopt, such as RAND Corporation's "netwar" analysis and the organizational, narrative, doctrinal, technological and social strategies by which it is characterized. A third type that attempts to do both of these things in an integrated synthesis fashion is that of Network Analysis in both its social and organizational forms. Here the questions focus is on determining the type of network that is being employed such as a chain, star, full-matrix or hybrid network, the amount of connectivity an individual or group node has within the network and the degree of self-awareness and commitment it has in terms of its own cohesiveness and potential for expansion. We begin with the qualitative organizational analysis offered by Gerlach's SPIN concept.

SPIN is an especially captivating concept for activists, particularly insofar as it emphasizes the inherent capability of networks to outperform administrative hierarchies, a fact that is acknowledged broadly by entities ranging from business magazines to military strategists. The main reason that they are able to do this is that structurally networks are far more dynamic and resilient than are hierarchies, especially insofar as they are able to paradoxically turn "failure" into an asset, as Bush is trying to do right now with the pre-knowledge of 9/11 situation. For instance, while there is certainly a marked absence of the "great leader" in social movements today, there is also no central head to chop off, the way administrative entities did to centrally important figures in movements past. And while there is probably an increased workload for movement activists brought on by networking, this sort of formation means that there are always dozens more who can fill in temporarily for a specific role. Finally, there is the most commonly pointed out "failure" of new social movements; that of a perceived "divisiveness" or "separatism" that is often embraced by youth, working class people, women, peoples of color, antiauthoritarians and anticapitalists. But in a SPIN, such internal schism (which is often not "schism" but a desire for self-determination) will usually result in a positively diverse, autonomous growth of self-determined groups making it possible for the network to truly become "all things to all people." This balance of autonomy and solidarity also means that when one cell of a SPIN fails in one way or another, the other parts of the SPIN needn't suffer as a result; they can simply disavow that part and continue on with their work, while the members of that cell can disperse into other more functional cells. So aside from the general paradoxical strengths they enjoy, the four major characteristics of a SPIN are:

1. **Segmented.** SPINs are not static, unitary entities; they are composed of cells that constantly attach, detach, divide, morph, expand and shrink forming multiple complex constellations and formations. For those still caught in the mechanistic paradigm, this fluidity and tendency towards "division" may be misinterpreted as a negative thing; yet in the network paradigm, division often positively affects growth, especially when a conscious effort is made to emphasize both autonomy and solidarity in paradoxical balance.
2. **Polycentric.** SPINs are not centered on a central figurehead or decision-maker; rather, important decisions are made with an emphasis on achieving consensus. What natural leadership does emerge tends to be a fluid and multi-headed hydra that is constantly challenged, shifted and rearranged resulting in organizations with far more dynamic constituencies than in hierarchical movements of the past.
3. **Integrated.** SPINs reject the mechanistic cults of localism and separatism as much as those of unity and globalism. Instead, hybrid relationships of all four are embraced in a conscious balance of local and group autonomy as well as global and intergroup solidarity. This integration is woven together by "margin walkers" who consciously connect common ideas, meetings, events and memberships through dispersed "switchboards" in ways that can often be confounding to traditional jurisdictionally oriented bureaucracies.
4. **Networks.** SPINs are generally conscious of their own existence as a network and are generally as committed to its ongoing cohesiveness and sustainability as they are to the open-endedness and fluidity that make it so dynamic and resilient. This self-consciousness is important because without it, they would not realize the tremendous power they

possess collectively which could lead to poor decision-making on all sides.

Next we will examine the strategic elements that SPINs often employ in their attempts to effect social change through a metastrategy that the RAND corporation refers to as “netwar” which is defined as “an emerging mode of conflict in which the protagonists use network forms of organization and related doctrines, strategies and technologies attuned to the information age.” Netwar is most effective however when used in combination with “swarming” which is “a strategic way to strike from all directions at a particular point or points by means of a sustainable pulsing of force.” In the past several years, netwar strategies have become especially popular in the Zapatista support networks, the antiglobalization movement as well as diverse other social movements including human rights networks, feminist networks and others. According to RAND, the surprising success of the netwar metastrategy is partially due to the element of surprise that is a result of its newness and partially to the fact that the bureaucracies of the old administrative institutions are simply not able to adequately respond without engaging in a massive internal transformation which will take them 5-10 times as long as it should take most grassroots social movements. RAND’s analysis of the netwar phenomenon argues that there are five primary aspects that effective netwarriors share in common, summed up in the acronym Social Narrative Organizational Doctrinal Technological (SNODT):

1. **Social.** Netwar emphasizes the strategic fostering of mutual trust and a sense of communal identification with one another often based on commonality of epistemology, friendship, culture, ethnicity, practices, class, gender or other factors. This trust is built through a conscious development of a “culture of resistance” that includes work, play, activism and socializing into an integrated social network.
2. **Narrative.** Netwar emphasizes the “strategic portrayal” of a communal story about why diverse people are involved, who we are organizing in opposition to and why the network and/or GSS is important to everyone involved locally and globally.
3. **Organizational.** Netwar emphasizes the strategic employment of network organizational structures including star, wheel, full-matrix and hybrid formations combined with a constantly changing “multi-headed hydra” leadership, typically based on a charismatic ability to articulate the narrative dimension of netwar strategy, in order to maintain optimum dynamism and resiliency in the face of less dynamic but currently ascendant hierarchical structures.
4. **Doctrinal.** Netwar emphasizes the strategic adoption of common underlying beliefs about what elements constitute an effective and ethical organizational form. For instance, the “swarm” doctrine is often embraced due to its relative dynamism, resiliency and balance of autonomy and solidarity.
5. **Technological.** Netwar emphasizes the strategic use of accessible, dynamic, diverse, reliable and versatile information technologies to exponentially improve the capabilities of the group including both high technology and low technology as applicable. The technological dimension of netwar strategy was key in the spontaneous September 2000 gas blockades in the UK, which spread through a combination of CBs, email, and flyers.

Finally, we will consider the results that emerge as a result of combining both qualitative organizational characteristics and strategic characteristics of networks in a third analytical tradition called Network Analysis. Network Analysis is most common in the incarnation known commonly as Social Network Analysis; SNA says that all relationships are and always have been networks of chain, star, wheel, matrix or hybrid formations; it then typically goes on to draw up a visual representation of the nodes and links in the network. While such a project is useful for developing a visual representation based on the centrality of highly interconnected nodes, it ultimately misses much that the more rigorous incarnation of Organizational Network Analysis picks up on. ONA is valuable in that it typically does all that SNA does except that it goes further by emphasizing also the importance of the self-consciousness of the network in addition to the importance of moving towards a full-matrix formation in particular. In addition ONA emphasizes the importance of commitment of the constituent part to the maintenance of the larger full-matrix network

III. The WTO Insurrections of 1999: Birth of a Global Social Supernetwork

In November and December of 1999 a series of networked uprisings, demonstrations, occupations, direct actions and riots occurred worldwide all with the common goal of shutting down the Third WTO Ministerial occurring in Seattle and demonstrating to the peoples of the world our ability to transform reality anytime that we are willing to exercise their ability to engage in netwar. The effort expended from all quarters was impressive; 60,000 in Seattle clogged streets, blocked delegates, walked out of school and work, destroyed corporate property, squatted vacant buildings and fought police resulting in the early closure of WTO meeting 1 pm on November 30. Worldwide some 400,000 took to the streets, attacking US embassies, WTO, World Bank and IMF buildings and fighting the police, resulting in third world delegates finally vocalizing their dissent, which in turn lead to Michael Moore’s famous “declaration of failure” of the WTO meeting at 10pm on December 3. In turn, the overwhelming success of these actions demonstrated to the world an emergent self-consciousness of a new “movement of movements” opposed to the global matrix of control in multiply interlocking ways, an entity I refer to as the Global Social Supernetwork (GSS).

All was not well in late 1999 however; the global elites behind the meetings had a “coming out party” of their own as well with the emergence of an entity I refer to as the Global Administrative Supernetwork (GAS). Of course, this was embodied in the general apparatus of control meeting at the time in Seattle to plan the future of the world; but it was also embodied in the Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Committee (MJPC), which is believed to have been directed by U.S. Military Delta Force rangers with the cooperation of the National Guard, FBI, BATF, SPD and other entities. It was the networked organizational structure of the MJPC that enabled it to engage in a full-fledged netwar with the GSS in the streets of Seattle that, due to its intensity and barbarism, has been described by some as a planned “thirdworldization” of the global North. The secretively conducted choice to locate the meeting in activist-dominated Seattle over the original business-friendly Dallas location seems to be part of the overall GAS strategy as well. By picking Seattle, they were essentially guaranteeing a massive demonstration the likes of which

hadn't been seen in North America since the Vietnam War. This would then create the pretext by which they could then proceed to engage in a concerted program of criminalizing nearly every constituency that could possibly be opposed to the WTO; students, unionists, street kids, anarchists, socialists and others have all felt the hot breath of the state breathing down their necks in the heady days since 1999. The program was one of heavily increased surveillance largely to create fear as a means of self-control within the participants, combined with a steady escalation of repressive measures usually reserved for the most exploited of the third world countries. These included such tactics as snatch squads, torture, mass imprisonment, attacking convergence spaces, use of chemical weapons, rubber bullets, real bullets, submachine guns, shotguns, and the "sejolization" of business districts in which special passes are required in order to enter. In addition to all of this, years before the death of the now infamous Carlo Giuliani came the death shortly after the WTO insurrections of long time activist Key Martin, a man who was infected with the HIV virus and died as a result of complications from tear gas and rubber bullets.

Ultimately however, the hybrid network structure of the MJPC was no match for the more thoroughly horizontalized GSS actions that shut down the downtown core and brought the WTO meetings crashing down; this powerful constellation of diverse forces that swarmed the GAS and the MJPC security forces was successful primarily because it was able to make the protests "all things to all people" thus creating a jurisdictional blurring between the various constituent parts, enabling the emergence of a more powerful self-organized whole operating under the logic of swarm intelligence. So, while to the mainstream of the Direct Action Network N30 was mostly a day of nonviolent civil disobedience, to the Black Block N30 was mostly a day of destruction of corporate facades and spontaneous radicalization of street youth. And while to the mainstream of the AFL-CIO it was mostly a day of rallies and marches, to the rank-and-file and more militant working class formations it was mostly a day of solidarity strikes and direct physical aid to the street fighting in the downtown core. This diversity of tactics, in all of its various forms was crucial to the eventual outcome of the insurrections. The RAND corporation has articulately described the superior power of this formation in Seattle and worldwide in their new book Networks and Netwars. "The Seattle police encountered a diverse, yet cohesive coalition of demonstrators with the objective of shutting down the WTO. This loosely organized coalition used and exploited intelligence, the principles of mass and maneuver, good real-time communications and well-practiced techniques to meet its objectives. Ultimately the police were overrun by this unique combination, demonstrating their failure to discern between lawful demonstrators, anarchists, opportunists and bystanders. As a result, the WTO sessions and ceremonies were disrupted and police credibility was challenged, particularly as the demonstrations were seen on global television and simultaneous demonstrations spilled over in cities across the globe."

The most important elements that led to these highly desirable ends were the means employed by the various constituent parts of the GSS, primarily the combination of a SPIN organizational formation with a "SNODT" netwar strategy. Lets begin our analysis by looking at how the organizational structure behind these actions can be seen as a classic SPIN on both the local and global level. First the local; the *segmentary* nature of this entity was evident in its three level structure that included official, rank-and-file, and autonomous dimensions all which were composed of smaller individual units. The official level, which included the Direct Action Network (DAN) the AFL-CIO and Peoples Assembly (PA) brought out large numbers of people to fill the ranks of the 10,000 strong street actions in the downtown core and to fill the ranks of the 50,000 strong labor march. The rank-and-file level consisted of the individual members of the affinity groups that constituted DAN, the AFL-CIO affiliated unions, the Black Block (BB), IWW, PA and unorganized street youth (USY) all of which possessed significant numbers of individual "margin walkers" who held membership in multiple organizations. Finally, the autonomous level was composed of those formal and informal groups that participated in the shutdown actions but not through the official channels provided by DAN, the AFL-CIO or PA including the Rank-and-File Labor Mobilization Committee (RAF-LMC), Workers and Students for a Walkout Network (WASFAWN), BB, IWW and USY. Therefore, the autonomous level of the SPIN in Seattle can thus be thought of as a loosely networked constellation of forces, with a vague separation between those sections revolving around the DAN action and those revolving around the AFL-CIO labor march. One way to describe this is by using an acronym to describe what was essentially an alliance of "Radical Interconnected Formations and Rank and File unionists," or "RIF-RAF." From a global perspective the segmentary nature of the N30 International Day of Action consisted of local formations loosely interconnected through joint "switchboards" including the N30 website and listserv and the already-established linkages provided as a result of the J18 International Day of Action that occurred earlier in 1999, the Peoples Global Action (PGA) General Assembly in India, and IWW and International Workers Association (IWA) networks from the IWW General Assembly and the I-99 International Solidarity Conference in San Francisco.

The segmented RIF-RAF of the GSS was also *polycentric* in that it had multiple competing and cooperating official, unofficial, spontaneous and organized leaders all of which constantly shifted in degree of influence and activism according to the shifting state of an incredibly fluid situation. For instance, locally, at the beginning of the day, leadership was primarily centered on officials within DAN and the AFL-CIO such as David Taylor and John Sweeney; by mid-afternoon the balance of power had shifted dramatically to the grassroots leadership from within both the organized and unorganized sections of the RIF-RAF. Generally however the rule seemed to be that everyone was their own leader and that nearly all decisions were to be made directly by the people involved. Globally the GSS leadership consisted mostly of grassroots activists who were willing to do the work that needed to be done and walk the margins that needed to be walked. The most important leaders in all of this were the local PGA affiliated activists in dozens of countries across South and North as well as J18/RTS affiliated activists. To a lesser degree IWW and IWA affiliated activists around the world helped to organize actions as well, though primarily in Northern countries.

These segmented and polycentric aspects of the SPIN were *integrated* as well on both the local and global level. Locally, there were dozens of jointly endorsed declarations such as that put forth by DAN for the early-morning N30 action to shut down the downtown core in order to block delegates from entering the WTO ministerial. Then there were the big joint meetings in which hundreds of activists from all sectors of the organizing would meet at the Seattle Labor Temple to share and compare strategies and to plan joint activity. The dozens of email listservs such as no2wto@listbot.com, wto_students_nw@listbot.com as well as websites such as <http://www.seattlewto.org/n30> amongst others were fundamental to drawing together diverse groups into the swarm. But ultimately it would not be the declarations, actions, meetings, listservs and websites themselves that would allow a SPIN to emerge; rather it was the individual human beings behind them, the polycentric "activist-leaders." These people were the margin-walkers who held multiple memberships in diverse groups, attended multiple meetings of these diverse groups and then consciously attempted to weave them together into a larger complementary whole. This spiders-web was the key to integration between the courses of action taken by AFL-CIO unions, DAN, the RAF-LMC, BB, IWW and others. Globally, the N30 listserv at <http://n30.listbot.com> created an important venue for integration of activity carried out globally by margin walkers who shared this information with their local communities, thus helping to build up a buzz about the day that ultimately led to inflated, high-energy actions that probably could not have occurred

otherwise.

Finally, the segmented, polycentric, integrated formations that carried out these actions did indeed form a larger whole that can be seen as a *network* at the local level and globally as the emergence of a GSS “network of networks.” The GSS and RIF-RAF networks were relatively conscious of the fact that they were functioning as a network even if they had only a small amount of literature depicting this sense of self-awareness. One good example of this would be the call sent around the world by the N30 Global Day of Action Collective which depicted it as a day of “autonomous actions, protests and carnivals against the capitalist system...bringing separate struggles together...as a decentralized and informal network of autonomous groups.” While there were consciously formed networks such as DAN on the local level there was very little understanding of the complementary nature of all of the various actions that took place. Only in hindsight has it become easier to discern the complex formation that successfully crashed the WTO meetings in which every part, opposed though they may have been formed a larger social supernetwork capable of swarming and netwar. Overall it was the convergence of these four organizational characteristics that made this formation a SPIN, with all of the myriad advantages that such a structure entails.

But while this organizational structure was imperative to a successful action in such a climate, the strategies that this SPIN used were at least equally so. It is in analyzing the strategic dimension that it becomes clearer why the netwar strategy was indispensable to successful actions in Seattle and around the world. So we begin by examining the *social* strategy that was employed; both locally and globally shared beliefs were consciously emphasized, such as that the WTO should be abolished, or that capitalism itself should be abolished. At a more grassroots level, groups were able to find commonality on many levels; social practices such as the Lesbian Avengers, epistemology such as Seattle Anarchist Response, culture such as affinity groups of hippies or punks and race such as the Brown Collective. At the same time and usually to the same degree, divergent beliefs at the local and global level were respected in a universal “agreement to disagree.” This was demonstrated in the joint activity of DAN, BB, IWW and other elements in blocking the WTO meeting from occurring even if they didn’t all agree to play by identical rules per se, thus allowing a sense of mutual trust to emerge where none existed before. This trust was ultimately built through a conscious development of a “culture of resistance” around the actions that included daily, weekly and monthly meetings, periodic parties, potlucks and other social events all leading to an integrated social network.

The social strategy however, is ultimately nested in the *narrative* strategy that was used by the local and global SPINs to put a “spin” on the activity in which they engaged jointly. Also referred to as a “strategic portrayal” this dimension went off quite well: the organizers projected a story of over 50,000 people from all perspectives, from all parts of the world converging in the streets of Seattle; in the end this prophecy was more than fulfilled as well over 50,000 materialized. This occurred on both the official DAN/AFL-CIO level and on the rank-and-file/autonomous RIF-RAF level, all of which promoted narratives with varying degrees of radical and militant language, thus making the actions appealing to those coming from extremely diverse comfort levels. Similarly, the N30 Global Day of Action Collective, PGA, and IWW “calls to action” consciously projected the story of a common struggle of “communities, grassroots groups and individuals around the world organizing their own autonomous actions, protests and carnivals against the capitalist system.” Another good example would be the Total Liberation Project which is largely an attempt to devise more coherent and encompassing narratives for SPINs.

Social and narrative strategies require a fleshed out *organizational* strategy of how networking would occur and what shape it would take on both the official and the RIF-RAF level. On the official level this meant DAN came up with an official strategy with “nonviolent” parameters and then promoted a sort of “top-down” networking between DAN-affiliated affinity groups in order to divide the blocks surrounding the WTO ministerial like a pie with a clusters of groups shutting down specific slices. For the AFL-CIO this meant ongoing networking between the “international” and the bureaucracies of the “local” labor councils who then attempted to hand down plans to individual union locals and individual union members. For the RIF-RAF the organizational strategy was just the opposite; instead the plan was to build a “bottom-up” strategy that started with diverse individual people and then worked its way up to the general level with an emphasis on diversity of tactics and ideas. This was the organizational strategy of the RAF-LMC and the BB who began networking with others in the same social space to form common autonomous strategies; this blossomed into regularly occurring meetings, websites and email lists which blossomed into a militant rank-and-file opposition from below, which then attempted to radicalize the general level of activity throughout the actions. If we zoom out for a moment and look at what was happening on both levels, it is clear that the two organizational strategies were actually complementary to one another; one strategy brought out tens of thousands that might not have otherwise come while the other radicalized the level of dissent, ultimately turning it into an event of world-historic proportions; in other words it was a situation of unity in diversity resulting in “the collective intelligence of groups of simple agents” - the very definition of swarm intelligence.

Next we will consider how the social, narrative and organizational strategies were aided by *doctrinal* strategies. As with other aspects we have looked at, there was no unified doctrinal strategy, rather there were multiple doctrines coming from all directions often pulling the same individual people in various directions at various points throughout. Though DAN demanded nonviolence as a precondition for participation in the shutdown activities, the BB in turn demanded autonomy from DAN’s universalist doctrinal strategy. However the doctrine was still open-ended enough to allow for a certain degree of diversity; there was no mechanism to forcefully exclude the BB or the IWW from participating in the action even if they adopted autonomous doctrines. And in turn the BB doctrine of decentralized destruction of corporate facades was able to draw normally depoliticized street youth into an insurrectionary situation that likely had a liberating effect on their self-consciousness. All of this that occurred unofficially in Seattle was taken even further in Quebec City a year and a half later where diverse groups explicitly agreed to a “diversity of tactics” doctrine in which color-coded zones would define the doctrinal strategy of those occupying that geographical space. This diversity of tactics is the most useful in swarm formations.

Finally, we come to the last strategic dimension, which is the one that is probably the most commonly misunderstood in regards to the WTO insurrections. This is the *technology* strategy, so often misunderstood to be the most important element underlying the social, narrative, organizational and doctrinal dimensions of SPIN strategy. But what such fashionable perspectives are missing is that there is no centrally important element; like the organizations they create, each constituent part is fundamental in its own right and is not reducible to any other part. Besides that fact, both high and low technology played major roles; wheatpasted posters, flyers, stickers and graffiti probably did as much to raise the consciousness of the general population as did listservs, websites and cellphones. So it wasn’t just “high” technology that was centrally important - though it was certainly an indispensable element - rather it was the strategic use of accessible, dynamic, diverse, reliable and versatile tools to exponentially improve the capabilities of the network. For this reason, two-way radios which are incredibly inexpensive and versatile were

probably more important in terms of direct communications on the streets. On the global level it is no different; while global listservs and websites helped to raise awareness and spread the “eros effect” like a global wildfire, ultimately the materialization of street protests came about as a result of low-tech activity on the local level. This is evident in the fact that in relatively low-tech country like the Phillipines thousands of people attacked the local World Bank building on N30; it seems obvious that this must have been primarily the result of flyers, posters and word-of-mouth advertising rather than just a few email listservs.

Aside from SPIN organizational characteristics and SNOTD strategic characteristics are the elements of spontaneity and creativity that were so pervasive throughout. Indeed, it was the synthesis of all of these elements that led a full-fledged netwar in the local arena of Seattle. This can be said because since those days in late 1999, it has come to light that the MJPC had met with the AFL-CIO and convinced them to follow a specific route for their march that would lead their 50,000 backwards in a u-turn to the Memorial Stadium. The plan was that the DAN protestors downtown would then be attacked just as the march was heading back, sweeping tens of thousands away from downtown and into the parade, ultimately opening up space so that delegates could get through and the WTO meetings could begin. But this did not occur after all, as members of the RAF-LMC, the IWW and the unorganized rank-and-file of the Longshoremen, Steelworkers, Sheetmetalworkers and other unions all spontaneously decided to break through the line of parade marshals in order to support the successful shutdown of the WTO meetings. The thousands that broke off overwhelmingly reinforced the crowds that were at that time being attacked brutally in an attempt to sweep them out of downtown. As a result of this unexpected flood of supporters, the police were unable to continue their strategy of both suppressing the RIF downtown and enabling the AFL-CIO march to continue away from downtown. And the AFL-CIO was unable to stop its RAF from uniting with the RIF downtown later that day, resulting in the RIF-RAF network that ultimately shut down the WTO in league with the simultaneous 500,000 strong N30 Global Day of Action - which probably had a great deal of influence on the third world delegates who finally crashed the ministerial.

IV. Conclusion: 19 Key Ideas for the Global Social Supernetwork

Despite the many bad aspects of the network paradigm in terms of how the GAS is utilizing them in order to extend its control in the wake of 9/11, there is much hope to be found for the GSS in general. With an officially announced 15 year trajectory for the U.S. military to reach the network level of “objective force” grassroots movements from below have several decades within which to make major headway, if we can manage to get all our cards in the right places. And even by 2015, the apparatus will never be able to become fully horizontal or else their authority would cease to exist; this means that social movements will always have the ability to outmaneuver them. Following are a list of 19 suggestions for just such a project.

1. RIF-RAF formations should be encouraged and consciously planned; they are crucial and they have happened at all major demonstrations since Seattle. The official DAN and AFL-CIO actions would likely not have shut down the WTO meetings nor would they have caught the headlines of the media worldwide. Internal disunity is often a positive sign and can lead to a situation of unity with dignity and self-determination.
2. RIF-RAF formations should do whatever is within reason to not scare off the mainstream activist and labor organizations either, as they are crucial as well; far fewer numbers would have actually been on the streets in the first place if it hadn't been for DAN and the AFL-CIO.
3. Blurring the concept of local and global is a key strategy; at the worldwide level if the actions had not included the N30 Global Day of Action it probably would have failed as well.
4. Blur distinctions between activists, constituents, leaders, and experts through education and development of multi-talented, well-rounded activists because centralization is becoming a liability rather than an asset.
5. Blur distinctions between diverse issue areas and social struggles, find points of unity and interconnectedness as often as possible but still within a context of respect for autonomy.
6. Activists should exploit the fact that the social level of blurring can take place much more quickly than can the administrative level, which can lead to hundreds of opportunities for outmaneuvering.
7. Activists should seek to expand the current crisis of legitimacy of the GAS in every way possible; since the WTO protests the IFIs are not nearly as well trusted as they had been.
8. Facilitate diversity of tactics and perspectives by consciously engaging a doctrine of this sort rather than hoping the inevitable will just “work itself out.”
9. Develop more encompassing, diverse, and intelockable narrative strategies and “memes” that can spread quickly, changing paradigms. This seems to be happening with the concept of “netwar” and anti-reductionism.
10. Exploit the power given to us by the new geography of the network paradigm; the closer we mimic natural design systems the more robust we will become and at a far quicker rate than the GAS.
11. Develop and facilitate the ability of activists to act as margin walkers in order to blur distinctions and to create networks that are as close to full-matrix as possible. The more connected a network is the more powerful it can become.
12. Raise general movement consciousness of the power of swarm intelligence, netwar and balance of autonomy and solidarity in order to combat counternetwar disinformation and fear tactics.
13. Since horizontalization will continue to move forward on all fronts, bringing with it the simultaneous possibility of catastrophe and utopia we need to emphasize those aspects that are liberating while minimizing the damages from those aspects that are not.
14. Since administrative entities will pursue a strategy of “harnessing” of NGOs by using them to replace state functions, we must turn this cooptation to movement advantage by creating competitive truly grassroots so-

- cial movements organized in a network fashion conducive to rapid expansion and diversification along varying levels of strategy and tactics.
15. We should continually analyze the trajectory of change that we seem to be on. For instance it has been recognized that protests in DC and LA were more centralized, less diverse, and had less AFL presence (and subsequently no RAF), but the trajectory represented by Quebec, Genoa and Argentina seem to indicate we're on the right track again.
 16. As national security shifts to networked structures we must out-organize them by becoming even more diverse and horizontal than before.
 17. With networked administrative entities will come an increased reliance on information warfare and perception management through mass media, meaning that networked open publishing media like IMCs need to be expanded and improvised exponentially.
 18. Natural margin walkers such as those who are of multiracial/cultural background, those who are bisexual, transgendered or any other "hybrid" type of person are more and more likely to become natural leaders in this situation since they are able to walk margins more effectively, thus creating networks; this should be encouraged.
 19. The subcontracting that is endemic to post-Fordist business networking will often lead to a lack of loyalty to the mother company, which should then be exploited as it was in the spontaneous September 2000 gas blockades in the UK, which spread through a combination of CBs, email, and flyers but which ultimately succeeded due to the participation of subcontracted truck drivers.

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