Canadian Federalism and the Anti-Globalization Movement: Managing Violence through Evolution

Officer Cadet Matthew Hou

Federalism, in the Canadian experience, has been an adept form of political organization in response to the integrative economic processes of globalization. Canada's ability to successfully transition from a domestic development economic model to a liberal free trade model without accompanying political shocks in the 1990s illustrates the resilience of its federal political structure to negotiate competing interests. Globalization's economic impact, multiplied by innovative communication technology, influences every aspect of economic and political decision-making today.¹ The accompanying reaction to globalization, anti-globalization, poses a range of challenges to extant economic and political methods of organization. The origins of the anti-globalization movement are more substantial than a general sense that globalization is fraying at the seams.² Anti-globalization, to some extent, is an outgrowth of substantial resistance to a status quo that does not adequately manage the claims of the dissatisfied. To better understand the current movement, globalization's principle processes will be analyzed to illuminate the three divergent strands of resistance. Furthermore, a reconciliation between contemporary Canadian federalism and the claims of the anti-

¹ Ian Adams, *Political Ideologies Today* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2001), 281.

² Naomi Klein et al., "The Fraying Seams of Globalization," *New Perspectives Quarterly* (2008): 1.

Officer Cadet Matthew Hou is currently in his fourth year of undergraduate studies at the Royal Military College of Canada completing a B.A. in Political Science (Honours). He will commence his M.A. in Security and Defence Management at RMC next year. His research interests include Canada's role in multilateral institutions like NATO, capacity building in multinational security organizations, politicized violence in the anti-globalization movement and the nexus between aboriginal movements and security. Matthew is eager to be commissioned in May 2010 as a Second Lieutenant with a classification in army logistics.

globalization movement illustrate the potential for further development on the federal model to address the ideological origins of anti-globalizationist protest.

The definition of globalization remains unresolved as a function of the movement's complexity. Most discussions of globalization view the phenomenon, unfortunately, as a homogenous and impersonal movement.³ Typically, globalization is seen to be an interrelated transformative process involving ideas, technology, social networks, international institutions and local cultures in the domains of culture, politics and economics. As international integration accelerates, the relative power of the nation-state is in decline while that of multinational corporations is in the ascent.⁴ David Held's thesis, that globalization involves four spatio-temporal facets, provides a useful definition of the "widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness."⁵ Globalization has an impact on the extensity, intensity, velocity and impact of human relations:

The concept of globalization implies that social, political and economic activities are increasingly extending across nation-state borders and, consequently, appear to give rise to a global plane of human relations. Second, this global or transnational connectedness intensifies because of the greater frequency and regularized patterns of interaction that form the transnationally embedded networks. Third, the growing extensity and intensity of global interconnectedness implies a speeding up of transnational interactions and processes. Fourth, globalization implies that the repercussion of decisions or events in one part of the planet can be felt elsewhere.⁶

Held's argument is unique in that it provides an analytical framework which surmounts the divide between globalists and sceptics. Two, largely incompatible, perspectives exist on the origins and nature of globalization. The sceptic's approach would have it that contemporary globalization is an extension of processes – international trade, capital flows, mass migration, economic integration – begun in the pre-1914 European

³ Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defence of Globalization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7.

⁴ Robert Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 19.

⁵ Richard Devetak, "Globalization's Shadow," in *The Globalization of Political Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 2.

⁶ Ibid.

imperialist era; the Cold War and two World Wars of the twentieth-century interrupted extant processes which have resumed and accelerated after 1991.⁷ Colonialism and imperialism before 1914 led to economic extensity through haciendas, mines and colonies while the intensity of globalization was fuelled by the vast movement of slaves, indentured servants and displaced peasants.⁸ Thus for the sceptic, the extensity and intensity of globalization are not new. In an extreme variant of the sceptic perspective, globalization began when people first ventured beyond their village to trade or to explore.⁹ Armand Mattelart contends that globalization and liberalism are an extension of the Enlightenment project to achieve human perfection through technological development.¹⁰ The implication of the sceptic's perspective is that globalization, as the experience of the twentieth-century demonstrated, can be halted by states. Furthermore, the sceptic views the current discourse on globalization, as an inevitable and inexorable process, a hegemonic element of our Weltanschauung that is fundamentally a fallacy. That is to say the globalist view is interpreted by the sceptics as an approach that denies the possibility of change from the status quo when a plethora of other viable options – change – is possible. Mattelart's ability to connect the intellectual foundations of liberal freedom, economic growth and reason's primacy is an example of the sceptic's narrative wherein globalization is viewed as "a particular manner of thinking which was in the interests of, and justified the actions of, powerful institutions."¹¹

Globalists typically concede that rapid economic integration has been a salient element of the international system since before the 1990s; where they disagree, however, with sceptics is in the belief that the *type* of globalization today is fundamentally distinct from that of yesterday. For the globalists, globalization is an outcome of significant structural changes in technology and policy.¹² The level to which governments have progressively reduced trade barriers while simultaneously encouraging international

⁷ Schirato and Webb, *Understanding Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 2003): 7.

⁸ André C. Drainville, "Resistance to Globalization from the Periphery," *International Social Science Journal* (2009): 238.

⁹ Nayan Chandra, "Runaway Globalization Without Governance," *Global Insights* (2008): 119.

¹⁰ Schirato and Webb, 27.

¹¹ Schirato and Webb, 27.

¹² Schirato and Webb, 8.

investment has increased the extensity of globalization.¹³ Specifically, technological innovation has permitted a more rapid ability to transfer capital, technology, ideas and goods to the extent that the velocity of current globalization is qualitatively different from that of the past.¹⁴ Also, globalists contend that the intensity and extensity of globalization has fostered a newfound sense of economic vulnerability rooted in increased competition. Since capital and technology are mobile whereas labour is still relatively fixed to a physical place, the ability to produce anything anywhere compels an unprecedented agility and flexibility from corporations, states and individuals. Finally, globalists note that the current phase of globalization is unique from the pre-1914 period because the state, as a result of the post-1945 rise of the welfare state, is expected by its citizens to provide a higher level of general welfare. The establishment of a social liberal model of governance in the advanced market economies offered an attractive and stable alternative to the competing ideologies of the twentieth-century.¹⁵ The state's enhanced capacity and mandate to act is put under stress by the extensity of modern globalization. In other words, the state's relative ability to act is smaller because of globalization but the state's expectations are larger.

The ideological components of anti-globalization do not individually compose a holistic critique of globalization. Rather, anti-globalization as a counter-movement represents the interests of environmentalists, indigenous groups, religious fundamentalists, liberals, communitarians, neo-Marxists, neo-anarchists, trade unionists, feminists, nationalists and libertarians among many others. While a motley mix, the anti-globalization movement can be generally noted by its lack of agreement with extant socio-economic structures and a desire to "level [current] hierarchies."¹⁶ Like globalization, anti-globalization is a contested concept with distinct and competing components; the leftist reaction can be alternatively called the global justice and solidarity movement, the alter-mondialisation movement, the alter-activist movement and

¹³ Bhagwati, 11.

¹⁴ Bhagwati, 12.

¹⁵ Kemal Dervis and Ceren Ozer, *A Better Globalization*, (Washington D.C.: Center for Global Development, 2005), 14.

¹⁶ James E. Cameron and Shannon L. Nickerson, "Predictors of Protest Among Anti-Globalization Demonstrators," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* (2009): 738.

transnational social movements. The distinct self-conceptions of anti-globalizationists illustrate the interest groups that are aggregated within each tribe. Interestingly, most groups purport to represent the entire anti-globalization movement though they have unique ideological rationales.

The global justice and solidarity movement, a relatively recent social grouping, is primarily motivated by a desire to mitigate the perceived injustice of a global neoliberal market economy in the interests of augmenting democracy.¹⁷ Thus the global justice variant of anti-globalization is founded on a critique of the economic-political order because the benefits of globalization are perceived to be inequitably distributed in favour of the wealthy or powerful. This strand of anti-globalization is primarily composed of middle-class and middle-aged activists with duties to families and a career.¹⁸ Furthermore, global justice and solidarity activists typically follow a hierarchical command structure with an elected leadership that make most routine decisions.¹⁹ Global justice and solidarity can be viewed as a continuation of the social-democratic desire to regulate markets to mitigate risk or to redistribute goods through the mechanism of the state. In one sense, global justice and solidarity is a movement that seeks a return to the Keynesian model's emphasis on the state as a unitary distributive actor. The democratic ideal is thought to be left impotent in the face of increasing economic and political inequality.²⁰ The discourse of global justice proponents, in a more international strand, invokes the language of rights and responsibilities within the tradition of cosmopolitan liberalism.

Alter-mondialisation or alter-globalization is a re-assemblage of the traditional left, socialists and Marxists, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with networks that include unions, reformist groups and continental European socialist parties.²¹ Similar to the global justice and solidarity strand of anti-globalization, alter-mondialisation's

¹⁷ Maria Zackariasson, "Angry Young Men? Masculinities and Emotion Among Young Male Activists in the Global Justice Movement," *The Journal of Men's Studies* (2009): 32.

¹⁸ Jeffrey S Juris, *Networking Futures: the Movements against Corporate Globalization*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 71.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Stephen D'Arcy, "The Militant Protester as Model Citizen," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* (2008): 294.

²¹ Jeffrey Shantz, "Re-Building Infrastructures of Resistance," *Socialism and Democracy* (2009): 103.

primary contention is that the existing economic-political structure neglects the interests of those without power. Alter-mondialisation differs from the other versions of anti-globalization in the trust placed in socialist, neo-Marxist and neo-anarchist remedies for the problems of globalization.²² Alter-mondialists place an emphasis on centralization in their organization structure and seek consensus decision-making outcomes with open participation.²³ An outgrowth of alter-mondialisation's less conventional forms has been alter-activism. While primarily engaged in a similar discourse as to the rationale for anti-globalization action, alter-activism is distinct from alter-mondialisation in the latter's belief that the methods of resistance are more important than the reasons for resistance. Alter-activism views lived experience to be the primary means of legitimization for political action; alter-activists, logically, prefer less hierarchical or local organization and organize globally using information technology.²⁴ As a reflection of alter-activism's abhorrence of vertical organization, the alter-activist strain of anti-globalization is composed of a younger, urban and primarily middle-class demographic as opposed to the leadership of older working-class and community members in alter-mondialisation.²⁵ Alter-activists organize themselves within and largely identify with small anti-capitalist communes that make decisions through consensus.²⁶ While alter-activism seeks more communal forms of socio-economic structure, alter-activism does not favour a return to the state as the primary arbiter of justice or to neo-Marxist solutions. In fact, alter-activism can be identified as a strand of anti-globalization that appeals to youth who are disengaged with the conventional apparatus of democracy.²⁷ The paucity of language concerning alter-activism's goals reflects the greater emphasis placed on the tactics of protest. Neo-anarchism lends itself to alter-activism given the atomized nature of alter-activism coupled with its focus on nonconventional protest outside democratic institutions.

²² Shantz, 102.

²³ Juris, *Networking Futures*, 71.

²⁴ J.S. Juris and G.. Pleyers, "Alter-activism: emerging cultures of participation among young global justice activists," *Journal of Youth Studies* (2009): 58.

²⁵ Juris and Pleyers, 58.

²⁶ Juris, *Networking Futures*, 71.

²⁷ Juris and Pleyers, 60.

Finally, the term ‘transnational social movements’ encompasses a complex system of indigenous anti-globalization movements. Although the preceding versions of anti-globalization largely focus on the socio-economic distributive components of globalization, transnational social movements are unique in the degree to which modernity itself is rejected.²⁸ The acceleration of export agriculture is an important catalyst for the increased size and intensity of these movements.²⁹ Given the local and highly connected nature of indigenous society, transnational social movements are a component of anti-globalization without significant global networks of protest.³⁰ Furthermore, the historical nature of indigenous people’s claims to sovereignty makes the transnational social movements aspect of anti-globalization indistinguishable from a critique of previous forms of modern political organization. Alter-mondialisation and the global justice movement are in some ways fundamentally incompatible with the transnational social movements’ desire for pre-state models of organization. Michel Foucault’s postmodernist delegitimization of the modern project’s search for universal truth, and universally applicable values, through reason offers a foundational ideology for transnational social movements. The work of communitarians like Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor might, intriguingly, offer a useful rubric to organize the claims of transnational social movements within the structure of the democratic state.

Canada’s federal political structure has remained relatively unchanged despite substantial global economic integration largely as a function of the unsystematic approach to negotiating substantial international economic agreements. The inability of either the federal or the provincial level of government to constitutionally assert a primacy in economic affairs to the exclusion of the other has been a structural component incentivizing cooperation on critical and specific economic issues. Intergovernmental negotiation at the deputy minister and minister’s level has therefore evolved as a norm when Canada both negotiates and implements treaties catalyzing further global economic integration. For instance, Ontario and Quebec have regularly participated, albeit

²⁸ Thomas D. Hall and James V. Fenelon, “Indigenous Movements and Globalization: What is Different? What is the Same?” *Globalizations* (2008): 2.

²⁹ Andre C. Drainville, “Resistance to Globalization from the Periphery of the World Economy,” *International Social Science Journal* (2009): 239.

³⁰ Hall and Fenelon, 2.

unofficially, as members of the Canadian delegation to important fora like the World Trade Organization.³¹ During the negotiation of both free trade agreements with the United States, a committee level mechanism established by Ottawa facilitated provincial interest aggregation.³² The use of cooperative ministerial conferences has even mitigated provincial intransigence to the implementation of specific global initiatives like Alberta's resistance to the Kyoto Accord.³³ Similarly, provinces are able to influence federal negotiating positions both before and during the treaty-making process. In contrast to Canada's experience, the regionalization of economic processes in Germany, as in most advanced democratic federations, has contributed to political centralization away from the Lander.³⁴ Federalism is, in the Canadian context, a manner in which the relative distribution of economic power between levels of government has remained intact.

The emphasis on an ad hoc intergovernmental negotiation process to address the claims of economic integration might similarly mitigate several ideological rationales for anti-globalist resistance. As a movement united by a quest to level social hierarchies, anti-globalization is abetted when the vertical distance between federal and provincial levels of government is minimized. A cooperative intergovernmental process for issues like socio-economic inequality might prove to be as successful as the international treaty making process. Similarly, intergovernmental cooperation is a necessity to mitigate the potential for politically inspired violence at events with symbolic importance to the anti-globalization movement; the level of integration between provincial and federal command structures in the preparation and the execution of security for the Vancouver Winter Olympics is an ideal type to replicate for the G20 Summit in Toronto. Two structural factors suggest that Canada will be able to responsively address the interests of anti-globalizationists into the future. First, the relatively decentralized regional nature of Canada's federation allows the aggregation of interests within provinces in a manner

³¹ Douglas M. Brown, "The Evolving Role of the Provinces in Canadian Trade Policy," in *Canadian Federalism: Meeting Global Economic Challenges?* (Kingston: IRPP, 1991): 91

³² Geoffrey Hale and Christopher Kukucha, "Investment, Trade and Growth: Multi-Level Regulatory Regime in Canada," *Carleton University School of Public Policy and Administration* (2004): 9.

³³ Christopher Kukucha, "The Role of the Provinces in Canadian Foreign Trade Policy: Multi-Level Governance and Sub-National Interests in the Twenty-First Century," (2005): 147.

³⁴ Axel Hulsemeier, *Globalization and Institutional Adjustment: Federalism as an Obstacle?*, (Cornwall: Ashgate, 2004): 56.

wherein a policy response to the same phenomenon is unique in Victoria as it is in Toronto. An implication of this decentralization is that a multiplicity of distinct responses to anti-globalization is likely to emerge from local exigencies. The best practices that emerge can then be cross-applied to address similar anti-globalizationist claims. Second, the relatively minor population base of Canadian provinces results in a closer relationship between the provincial level of government and the public. Anti-globalization arguments, therefore, are more likely to be expressed and interpreted at the provincial level in a small federation like Canada. Furthermore, the flexibility of provincial governments in such a setting consequently leads to a greater ability to respond to the intensiveness of globalization. While the capability of the provinces to manage the claims of the global justice and solidarity strand of anti-globalization is sound, the more compelling question into the future will be whether the anti-state outlook of alter-activism or the neo-Marxist impulse underpinning alter-mondialisation can be addressed through a federal structure.

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