Swiss Political Organizations of the Far Left and Globalization: Discourse and Practices toward Inequality[*]

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This paper presents a partial analysis of the discourse and practices of the Swiss far left political organizations in a context of globalization. Unanimously depicted by the far left as a cause of socio-economic inequalities and deregulation, current global politics are highly subject to attacks. The criticism of the phenomenon expressed in a constructive manner by the far left goes hand in hand with a range of alternative propositions. Nevertheless, the responses to globalization vary strongly and thus complicate a unified strategy. Their diversity drives us to consider far left as a constellation. The concrete case on which our observation is based is the vote of September 25 2005 on extending the free movement of people to the new eastern member states of the European Union, and on the reinforcement of the accompaniment measures. The divergent argumentations are examined in order to learn about far left practices and positions toward a concrete manifestation of globalization.

Introduction

During the last decades, several large-scale mutations have occurred in economic, political, institutional, social and societal fields. Among the main changes, Delwit and De Waele (1993) mention the 'europeanization' of social and economic policies, the collapse of the USSR, and the internationalization of the economy, finances, as well as of centres of decision-making. If the phenomenon of globalization isn't new, the frequent use of the concept to discuss changes in the international economy and in world politics is rather recent. Such evolutions force political organizations to reposition themselves according to new configurations. Institutional, historical and socio-cultural constraints impose themselves to collective actors who, in turn, provide responses through discourses and practices.

Since the 1990s mainly, many protest events around the world have accompanied these macro-transformations. For example, the neo-zapatist insurrection of 1994 in Mexico, the strikes in France in 1995, the European march against unemployment, precariousness and social exclusion in 1997 and the demonstrations in Seattle against the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in 1999 reveal a large discontent toward politics. In Switzerland, a few national and international issues have generated mobilizations through direct democracy, street protests and strikes: amid others, the revelation of the "political files scandal" and of the existence of an extra-legal secret army and a special enquiries service in Switzerland, the United Nations (UN) and American military interventions abroad, the ongoing disparity between men and women, the restructuring policies penalizing the public services' employees, the deterioration of education conditions and the liberalization of agricultural trade. Evidence shows that the globalization process faces a strong opposition coming from numerous protesting groups sharing the determination to forge an alternative to neo-liberalism and a core motivation: "(…) une profonde indignation, un sentiment aigu d'injustice face à l'accroissement considérable des inégalités et de la pauvreté, tant à l'échelle nationale qu'internationale." (Sommier 2003: 79) The inequitable distribution of the global benefits is seen as highly condemnable.

The members of this collective resistance disapprove of globalization in its current form, not of the principle of globalism as such; besides, they are themselves either global organizations or ideologically internationalist organizations. This consideration explains the shift from the term "anti-globalization" toward the expression "alterglobalism" to designate the adherents to another kind of globalization.

This paper examines the positions of the far left in Switzerland, a specific actor inside the alterglobalist network, to evaluate to which extent we can identify a cohesive response to globalization. We start by presenting a general outline of the selected organizations, their characteristics and the context in which they evolve. We then concentrate our attention on their perception of globalization as observable through their discourse. Finally we turn to a case study to analyze the organizations' ideas and practices regarding a particular and concrete issue.

The Far Left Political Organizations

The political organizations of the far left studied here represent one component of the politics of resistance among other actors such as social movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and trade unions. Fougier (2008) shows how the alterglobalist movement and the political organizations of the far left are related through ideological proximity, common campaigns and multi-positional activism. It's true that the borders between social movements and political organizations are fuzzy and permeable, hence the difficulty to define accurately our objects. Most of the analysed organizations present a hybrid form, a mix between movement and party characteristics. For example, some organizations could be located in the

"movement parties" category defined by Kitschelt (2006: 280) as "coalitions of political activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition." Other organizations fit the opposite variety, that is to say they present the organizational aspects of a party, without its main mobilization attribute: its electoral competitiveness. Nevertheless, beyond the shared features, some distinctions of form and content shape the singular identity of these different social and political forces and allow us to define our organizations[1].

The broad expression "political organization" offers the possibility to include a wide range of political groups, such as anarchist organizations that reject the label of political party, and to recognize their somewhat hybrid character. These organizations are duly organized and built on a political axis. Seiler (2000: 21) describes an organization as an "association programmée rationnellement en vue d'une finalité." This definition points at the necessity for an organization to elaborate an overall project of social order and to try to implement it. The importance of political competition between organizations (Offerlé 2002) is equally satisfied, even if it takes place outside the electoral sphere. By participating directly in political action through resource mobilization, recruitment of members, interest aggregation and program articulation for example, the political organizations seek to impose their legitimate principles of vision and division of the social world (Bourdieu 2000).

The definition of the far left is equally problematic as this political category fluctuates through time and space. Like "political organization", "far left" is a broad concept that includes many different tendencies from traditional communist parties or extreme left organizations to libertarian groups. According to the one-dimensional criterion of the right-left dualism, the far left can be identified with a political segment localized at the extreme left on the right-left axis in view of its cultural and moral sensitivities. In this sense, it's usually situated to the left of the Socialist International (Anderson and Camiller 1994). A few minimal characteristics give cohesion to the far left category despite the significant differences existing between its political families. First, they share common origins, which are the European socialism of the early XIXth century and the birth of the working movement. This common historical reference also provides a fundamental ideological orientation. Secondly, the egalitarian creed is very present in their political thinking. If both alterglobalist movements and leftist organizations pursue an egalitarian objective, the first are more concerned with "recognition equality" while the second are rather concentrated on "possession equality" (Caillé 2006: 8). To sum up, their special concern is the issue of the work-capital relation. To a certain extent, their protest is linked to the working class struggle and focuses on material distribution. Finally, their criticism and denial of the current socio-political and economic system pertain to their "radical" ideological identity. Removed from the social-democratic doctrine[2], they declare themselves in favour of an alternative project to capitalism and neo-liberalism. A drastic change in economic, political and social patterns is targeted, not gradual improvements. Immediate goals can be shared with other alterglobalist actors, but they must be conceived as intermediate objectives inseparable of a larger horizon carrier of a global alternative[3]. If anti-neo-liberal-globalization creates consensus more easily, the anti-capitalist position is still specific to the far left organizations.

We must keep in mind that this broad outline circumscribing the far left is partly arbitrary and is used mainly for hermeneutical purposes, as it doesn't take into account the many nuances existing from one organization to another. It has nevertheless permitted to select a few Swiss organizations: the communist party Parti Suisse du Travail (PST), the Marxist movements the Indépendants, SolidaritéS, Mouvement Pour le Socialisme (MPS), the libertarian group Organisation Socialiste Libertaire (OSL) and the radical left association Alternative Liste (AL)[4]. The PST, Indépendants and SolidaritéS form in Geneva the Alliance de Gauche (AdG)

and the same organizations plus AL compose on the national level the federation A Gauche Toute! (AGT!).

Explaining Protest Mobilizations in a Consensual Democracy

One might ask why a concerted opposition to globalization and more broadly to inequality takes place in Switzerland, recognized for its prosperity, democratic rules and distance from worldwide policy. Goodwin (2005) notices that, in the globalization era, democracy acts as a brake on the development of revolutionary movements. Switzerland presents none of the state characteristics identified by Goodwin as favourable to the appearance of such movements. Besides, Switzerland is typified as a consociational regime, which has the particularity to assure stability and peace in culturally and socially heterogeneous societies by overcoming the cultural cleavages (Lijphart 1999) and risks engendered by direct democracy (Kriesi 1998). This consensual way of governing induces specific practices, like strong political cooperation amid the political elites, integration and cooptation of the opposition, negotiation principle, multiparty system, federalism, etc. If consolidated democracies are considered as highly counterrevolutionary, consensual regimes look even less suitable to the emergence of radical protesting movements following a conflicting logic.

Nevertheless, many factors can explain the persistence of such protest tendencies in democracy. If democracy is rather inhospitable to militant movements, it doesn't however eliminate social conflict. This fact could explain the permanence of a dissident front. Democracy reduces the probability of a radical change by pacifying and institutionalising many forms of social conflict, not by bringing about social justice – formal democracy is compatible with precariousness, inequality, racism, etc. In other words: "The prevalence of poverty and other social problems is precisely why extraparliamentary movements for social justice so often arise in democratic contexts." (Goodwin 2005: 420) Morelli and Gotovich (2007) underline the fact that in a prosperous country not everyone enjoys welfare benefits, as indicated by obvious differences in incomes, access to health care or higher education. They add that privileged persons are usually at the origin of protesting action, as they dispose of social conditions – economic and cultural capitals (Bourdieu 1981) – to participate actively in politics. Talking about wealthy militants or theoricians, Morelli and Gotovich (2007: 10) assert: "Ils ne revendiquaient rien quant à leur situation personnelle mais leur position de privilégiés leur permettait d'analyser avec acuité la réalité sociale, économique et politique et de la critiquer violemment." Following the same reasoning, Gruffydd Jones (2005) notices that the involvement in a protesting movement presupposes at least a certain normality, stability and security of the national environment, which are conditions to envisage a better future and a collective cooperation to achieve it.

In addition, beyond the formal and informal invariants characterizing Switzerland, the country is also subject to conjunctural international changes. An effect of globalization is that "political communities can no longer be considered (…) as simply 'discrete worlds' or as self-enclosed political spaces; they are enmeshed in complex structures of overlapping forces, relations and networks." (Held and McGrew 2002: 123) Despite its relative isolation in the political Europe and its strong stability, Switzerland participates of a larger context that affects it. As trading partners, Switzerland and the European Union (EU) cooperate through bilateral treaties. Switzerland is also an important centre for international economic activities as illustrated by examples like the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Geneva in 1998 to celebrate the 50th birthday of the GATT negotiations initiating a globalized economy under free-trade rules, and the World Economic Forum (WEF) that traditionally takes place in Davos. If the economic integration of the country is more pronounced, the political integration into the global arena remains weaker, however increasing. On the matter, Bernauer and Walter (2007: 71) conclude, "Switzerland's position in the world is characterized by

contradictions. While it is one of the most 'globalized' countries from a socioeconomic viewpoint, the political adjustment process to the global geopolitical and economic changes since the mid-1980s has been slow and protracted."

Finally, the protest flourishing in Switzerland is simultaneously directed toward the national world and the outside world, as inequality prospers between states, but also within states. Battling against globalization on a national scale makes sense since globalization has softened the traditional distinction between domestic and foreign politics. Globalization's opponents consider it accountable for reproducing on a worldwide level the inequality already damaging at the regional level. From one polity to another, the citizens face the same difficulties: unemployment, privatization, relocation, etc. Nevertheless, turning one's attention to a specific and local complaint helps to understand and analyse the macro protests' grounds.

Far Left and Current Globalization: a Hostile Relation

Marxist and revolutionary perceptions of globalization and global governance vary across time and space and from one political trend to another (Callinicos 2002). In the late 1960s, the debate focuses mainly on the role of the United States (US). Callinicos (2002: 255) identifies three tendencies: "US super-imperialism" seeing US as the organizer of world capitalism dominating other capitalist states, "Ultra-imperialism" believing in the preservation of the system's unity thanks to the existence of a dominant coalition gathering together relatively autonomous imperialist states, and "Imperial rivalry" considering the risky struggles between relatively autonomous states as threatening the unity. By the 1990s, under a different international context, two other interpretations of world politics divide the far left's thought. On one side, the "US ultra-imperialism" current defends the version of a hegemonic US domination. The US pursue a world order that would correspond to their national interests and would respect their supremacy in the international political economy. On the other side, the adherents to the concept of "Empire" developed by Michael Hardt and Toni Negri support the theory of an "imperial sovereignty". This new form of sovereignty consists in an apparatus of power devoid of any centred or territorialized shape. The so-called "multitude" opposes a strong resistance to it. Parallels can be drawn between the dichotomy observed by Callinicos and the partition made by Held and McGrew (2002) separating "sceptical" and "globalist" views of globalization. The "sceptics" see exaggeration in the perception of the phenomenon, globalization being nothing else than an indirect way of pursuing and legitimizing a global free market project and the consolidation of the Anglo-American capitalism within the hegemonic economic regions. The "globalists" represented by both detractors and supporters of globalization identify it as a major global change in the direction of growing worldwide interaction and interconnectedness. Whatever the exact theory to which the leftist organizations refer, they usually follow the line of the many "critical theories": "(…) it is the Marxists who have paid [anti-globalisation movement] most attention, with some being optimistic about the counter-hegemonic potential of the movement and others offering a more sceptical assessment." (Eschle and Maiguashca 2005)

Generally, approaches in terms of domination are close to the world-system theory (Wallerstein 1974), which situates the origins of current inequalities in the historical exploitative process of the core countries on the peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. The leftist, and especially Marxist, point of view links closely the notions of globalization and global governance with those of imperialism and capitalism. Imperialism results from the necessity for great powers to export capital in order to maintain high profit levels. This practice guided by expansionist logic leads to large competition and international conflicts, hence the current capitalistic form of globalization. The criticism of neo-liberal globalization is thus connected to anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism. According to Callinicos (2002: 262-263) there is at least one common Marxist interpretation of world politics; the current

configuration stems from a "process of capital accumulation occurring on a global scale" and knows a "competitive struggle between a plurality of centres of capital accumulation".

Swiss Political Organizations of the Far Left Facing Globalization

Perception

We are now interested to see how the collective actors we are studying perceive globalization. We therefore focus on the nature and form of globalization, the criticisms addressed to it, and the enunciated alternatives. It remains difficult to identify each element separately as they are intrinsically tied together in a kind of process: the nature of globalization induces accusations that generate alternatives in return.

First, the observed actors emphasize mainly the socio-economic aspect of the global system and its presumed characteristics: competitiveness, exploitation, spoliation, etc. Political and cultural expressions of globalization are considered of secondary importance but aren't denied. Political organizations of the far left are for example aware of "gendered" or "racialised" hierarchies. If global politics isn't usually discussed in itself, international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and G8 are frequently denounced as decisional organisms of the global economic policy. Then, the nature of the globalization project is unanimously depicted as neo-liberal. It goes hand in hand with liberalization and privatization, opening the doors to deregulation, work flexibility, complete liberty for capital holders, etc. Neo-liberal capitalist trends of globalization, driven by a logic of capital accumulation and profit seeking, are antagonistic to the principles of equality and common good. The general rule under which globalization operates is seen as in complete discordance with the far left's values, established on a strong socialist basis. Consequently, leftist organizations condemn the whole system. Again, we must note that the grievance targets not the market principle but the capitalist market economy.

Some organizations also see globalization as hegemonic and imperialist. The dominant powers, and mainly the US after September 11 2001, are seen to have world politics under control. They reign supreme over politics and markets at the expense of peripheral countries and populations. Domination is thus recognized as a key inclination of globalization. The Marxist organizations follow mainly the 'US ultra-imperialism' perspective described by Callinicos (2002). The libertarian organization equally highlights the domination character of globalization, but has more affinity with the "Empire" perspective: "L'Empire sacrifie l'élément spectaculaire de sa légitimité démocratique et la remplace par un programme sécuritaire policier et militaire qui prétend régenter le monde, coloniser tous les aspects de la vie et répondre aux aspirations centrales de la société."[5] The world is depicted as two main antagonistic camps facing each other, the Empire and the insurgent multitudes. The Empire's capitalism is globalized, showing a massive interdependence between its apparatuses, policies, and strategic and decisional processes.

Criticisms

Extreme left and communist organizations focus intently on the project of an egalitarian society and have criticism of inequality and exploitation as common denominator. A negative view of contemporary society – oppressive, unfair and exploitative – motivated the formation of each of these organizations. From then on, the first reproach addressed to globalization is its incapacity to resolve a range of global problems, such as diseases, wars, and inequalities in areas listed by Bradshaw and Wallace (1996): child mortality, gross national product per capita, life expectancy, educational achievement, etc. Global governance is censured for its inability to reduce such phenomenon but more, it is partly held responsible for their appearance on a national and international level. Globalization holds a tendency toward "risk, uncertainty and instability" that proves to be potentially damaging for the economic balance,

the spirit of solidarity inside society and the environment (Heywood 2002: 142). The examined organizations declare that globalization fosters deep socio-economic gaps between regions, countries, social levels, genders, employees and employers, native and foreign workers. It reinforces economic problems like financial crises, unemployment, precariousness, by implementing austerity measures. War appears equally in the catalogue of the potential risks arising from capitalist globalization. For all these reasons, this last is commonly portrayed as a source of deregulation following an "involution" process.

The link between globalization and democracy is also discussed, as the economic governance of the world is perceived as anti-democratic. For example, multinational corporations have gained a monopoly of economic power by means of globalization (Heywood 2002). Using the relocation strategy, they avoid democratic control by establishing their capital and production in developing countries, where wage and production costs are low and resources easily available. According to the far left actors, politics and economy should be unconditional partners within a real democracy. In the terms used by Held and McGrew (2002: 114), "the achievement of 'real democracy' is conceived as inseparable from the achievement of social and economic equality, the establishment of the necessary conditions for self-development, and the creation of strong political communities." The libertarian tradition also accuses globalized capitalism of standardization and destruction of the individual and its possibility of auto-determination. Though liberal values are generously promulgated, liberal economic principles always have priority at the cost of the others. Finally, the standard principles of democracy still haven't reached many countries around the world despite the global democratic model that is supposedly diffused by globalization.

To resume, from the detractors' viewpoint, the most unbearable aspect of globalization is the gap between the general discourse given by its upholders – what Callinicos (2002) calls "legitimising discourses" – and the tangible opposite consequences. In spite of the promises of imminent common benefits through globalization, global welfare is taking a long time to materialize. A hitting contrast subsists between theoretical grounds and practical effects.

Alternatives

Even if the socio-historical and institutional contexts constrain individuals and collective actors, they still dispose of room for manoeuvring inside this environment. A balanced tension between structure and agency gives leftist organizations the opportunity to formulate responses to the globalization phenomenon. Houtart (2002), from his actor's perspective, identifies two kinds of alternatives: a "neo-Keynesian" one, which seeks to humanize capitalism inside the system, and a "post-capitalist" one, which wants to overturn capitalism with the aim of replacing it. Houtart clearly separates the alternatives within the system from the alternatives to the system. As seen before, the organizations of the far left have more connivance with the second option. While they join the Global Justice Movement on common claims, like debt cancellation or the imposition of a Tobin Tax, they propose further and radical changes through their global projects of society[6]. A set of unwavering principles, inspired by a broad socialist doctrine, should direct the new social order. Far left organizations think in terms of processes: democratization, awareness building, mobilization and aggregation of potential forces, among others, must bring about the expected deep modifications of the system. For most of the groups, these steps should – when the right moment comes – achieve an overthrow of capitalism by provoking a final "rupture". Emancipation is the most expected transformation. The willingness to achieve a society free from any kind of exploitation, oppression and discrimination is central. It rejoins the egalitarian project mentioned before. Concrete measures along two axes should allow the freeing of mankind. First, a social and political dimension would promote active solidarity, new citizenship, real social, cultural and economic democracy, and a society under the control

of people and without class distinction or injustices. Then, an economic dimension would uphold an economy responding to the global needs and, in the opinion of some of the studied groups, a socialist mode of production, which means the collective property of the means of production. Only a globalization respectful of fundamental rights and based on principles of solidarity will be tolerated. To summarize the main points, what they put forward instead of neo-liberal globalization is a "bottom-up" vision of a civilizing world order (Held and McGrew 2002: 112-113).

There are thus many conceptions of globalization and proposed ways to counterbalance it. Hence the interest to look at the discourses and strategies that the far left adopts on a particular concrete situation.

Swiss – EU Bilateral Agreements: Extending Free Movement of People, an Issue to Debate

EU: an expression of globalization

We now turn to an empirical case, the vote on extending the agreement on free movement of people, in order to evaluate the concrete responses given by the far left to a manifestation of globalization.

In general, the radical left is rather hostile to the EU, once again, not to the organism per se, but to the presumed neo-liberal and antisocial form it assumes. The current European configuration is a product of the international system setting the tone; and, in return, EU acts as a principal promoter of liberalization. The OSL depicts the EU as a regional institution at the disposal of globalization[7]. Some Swiss organizations of the far left have understood the French refusal of the European constitutional treaty as a general objection to the dogma of globalized capitalism and as an encouragement to join the EU in order to change it[8].

In Switzerland, the principle of European integration has encountered resistance, hence the "no" to the adhesion to the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1992. Since then, cooperation between Switzerland and the EU is founded on the bilateral approach leading to sector-based treaties. The agreement on free movement of people (ALCP) with the (at that time) fifteen EU member states was part of the seven agreements enclosed in the first negotiated package, the Bilateral Agreements I, signed in 1999 but effective since 2002. It had the mission to gradually facilitate living and work conditions of European citizens in Switzerland. The Swiss employment market is thus progressively opened to foreign labor forces until 2014 with the possibility to launch a referendum in 2009 on the renewal of the treaty. A range of dispositions, known as the "accompaniment measures" reducing risks of social and wage dumping, were introduced in 2004. The organizations of the far left clearly interpret these agreements as an aspect of capitalist globalization as they suppose reorganization at an international scale and increase competition at all levels – within firms, between regions, among countries. In 2000, the agreement was accepted by 67% of Swiss voters.

How to position oneself on an arduous case of globalization?

The vote at stake on September 25, 2005 concerns the additional protocol extending the free movement of people to the ten new eastern European member states, and the reinforcement of the protection measures – in brief, more control, facilitated extension of the obligatory collective agreements and sanctions. Almost all the political parties, with the exception of the radical right, support the protocol. Lobbies, including major trade unions, adopt the same attitude. Although a consensus is found among the political and socio-economic elite, a huge debate on the left surrounds this issue. Tensions within the trade union sector and occasional discrepancies between local sections and their national basis show a divided left. The dismissal of an employee of the Swiss Trade Union (USS) for having publicly defended the referendum represents a key example of the polemic generated by the issue.

Diverse and conflicting positions on the topic also challenge the already fragile unity of the far left movements. In autumn 2004, the first discussions on the matter appear in each group. Scepticism largely dominates in light of the risks contained in the protocol. A leftist referendum, separated from the one launched by radical rightist parties – like the Union Démocratique du Centre (UDC), also divided on the question – is suggested. SolidaritéS considers this option suitable to battle against the neo-liberal deregulation of the work market[9]. Major groups rally to this institutional solution. Surprisingly, by January 2005, intern debates have generated new configurations. While the MPS starts its consciousness-raising campaign in favour of the referendum, SolidaritéS presents a new position in rejecting this strategy. Traditional allies of SolidaritéS, the Geneva local section of the PST and the Indépendants take a different path and unexpectedly join the MPS. Together they support the leftist referendum "Pour une libre circulation accompagnée de droits sociaux et syndicaux renforcés!" (For a free movement of people with reinforced social and union rights!) This division durably shakes the Alliance de Gauche (AdG): SolidaritéS in Geneva quits this local far left alliance entered into in 1993, leaving the PST and the Indépendants. The PST also suffers a split-up. Its Geneva section doesn't follow the national trend of the party and takes up different slogans. Divergences appear even on the communal scale with some of the Indépendants coming down in favour of the referendum and others coming out against it. At the beginning of 2005, the two leftist camps are settled. What follows is an analysis of the exchange of socio-political and economic arguments.

In spring 2005, the referendum succeeds mainly due to the contribution of the rightist groups. Under such conditions, the MPS and the AdG work on an argumentation that must be strong enough to defend the referendum while deconstructing the reasons put forward by the radical right. They want to give citizens the possibility to reject the protocol without being associated to rightist ideals. Two major economic arguments are advanced. First, the agreement is globally unfavourable to employees. It brings a major logic of the capitalist system into operation: a toughened competition between workers that would offer employers the possibility to reduce labor costs. This practice is concomitant to the dismantling of the employees' rights via augmentation and intensification of working hours, pressure on wages, attacks on social insurances. The agreement increases social inequality by serving exclusively the interests of the economic minority controlling the country. While wage earners suffer from stress, lay-offs, unemployment or stagnation of wages, the employers and their firms (Swisscom, Roche, Novartis, etc.) raise their profits and benefits. A second argument becomes increasingly strong during the campaign. It points at the inefficiency and insufficiency of the accompaniment measures in reality. For example, the criteria allowing an intervention from the tripartite commission are very restrictive, the number of work inspectors is far too reduced to be effective, the declaration of temporary assigned workers by the employers remains allusive and incomplete and finally many dispositions complicate the extension of collective agreements despite the amended improvements. Both new immigrant workers and Swiss workers lose advantages in this situation. To underpin its argumentation, the MPS relies on concrete examples showing the deterioration of work conditions and quotes several declarations of employers and political personalities. Altogether, the essential threats contained in the additional protocol consist in social and wage dumping.

From a socio-political viewpoint, the MPS and AdG assert their natural disposition in favour of a free movement of people. Nevertheless, the MPS considers that the agreement is nothing less than a cooptation of the employees by the world market. It is interesting to notice that the term "free movement of people" is usually put into brackets to illustrate its fictive character. Furthermore, if the free movement of people is undoubtedly an elementary right, they remind that it has to be respected among other rights, like having a job, freedom to choose an occupation, practising it under equitable and satisfying conditions. This adhesion to the

principle of the free movement of people leads their reasoning concerning the immigration issue. Their opposition to the protocol is clearly not directed against the migrants. On the contrary, they assert that demands for effective and reinforced accompaniment measures seek not only to protect immigrant workers from all kinds of abuses, but also to prevent latent xenophobic attitudes. Yet the ambiguity of certain protection measures is deplored, for example, work inspectors checking casual work will also prosecute the undocumented workers. The referendum group also stipulates that this free movement of people is partial and discriminatory because it shuts the doors to extra-European immigration. Thus the MPS describes it as an "economically selective" free movement of people[10]. Finally on the migration question, the MPS and AdG judge that the racist argument isn't central among the supporters of the referendum. More than any other arguments, worries and fear have convinced a large per cent of the citizens to reject the agreement: it is the social question – not the xenophobic one – that was at the heart of the vote.[11] The fact that a xenophobic part of the UDC accepts the protocol proves that the decisive argument is economic. At last, the "guillotine clause" favourable to the treaty, according to which the whole bilateral package would be cancelled if the referendum were to be successful, is erroneous. For the MPS, it is perfectly intelligible that European states have too many interests involved in such agreements to give them up. For the AdG, the cancelling of the bilateral agreements should rather be conceived as a positive step since it would give the opportunity to build another Europe on a social basis.

It is important to underline that the AdG is launching at the same time, but without the support of the MPS, a cantonal initiative in Geneva called "Mesures urgentes pour la protection de l'emploi et le maintien des salaires" (Emergency measures for the protection of employment and the stability of wages). Among other dispositions, it seeks to give work priority to workers already residing in Geneva. Particularly concerned with the "boom of arrivals", they draw attention to the strong increase in the active population of the border city[12].

Concrete measures are demanded through the referendum tool: protection against abusive lay-offs appearing in the employment law and especially for union and staff representatives, duty for the employers to declare wages, working hours and qualifications of the non-resident employees spontaneously, comprehensive access for work inspectors inside the firms, extension of a collective agreement at the request of organized employees, obligatory constraining employment contracts where no collective agreement is in place. The referendum would thus act as a simple moratorium to the free movement of people. After an eventual victory of the referendum, further and stronger accompaniment measures should be renegotiated.

Once their position definitely fixed in January 2005, SolidaritéS, PST and AL, members of the federative group A Gauche toute! (AGT!), develop a common argumentation, largely shared by the OSL. As seen above, SolidaritéS changed its opinion toward the end of 2004. Nevertheless, its appreciation of the protocol's content and consequences remains the same, however softened. The organization still argues that accompaniment measures are derisory and offer no serious protection against social and wage dumping. It also calls for awareness of the fact that such a protocol satisfies mainly the interests of the employers. And yet, a few considerations have induced its choice in favour of the protocol. First, the success of the referendum would have disastrous economic consequences. It would undoubtedly result in relocation and attacks against the employees' interests in order to reduce different costs. In addition, it seems evident that workers of the ten new member states will come anyway, with or without legal status. In the second case, their consequent vulnerability on the work market would be easily exploited.

The socio-political grounds predominate in the discourse of the groups favourable to the extension. Especially, the free movement of people as an intangible principle incites to automatic consent. Its status as a fundamental human right is central in the broad and united appeal of June 20 2005 called "Abattre tous les murs et lutter ensemble, avec le plombier polonais ou tchèque, pour nos conditions de travail!" (Knock down all the walls and fight together with the Polish or Czech plumber for our work conditions!) Respect of the openness of borders has also moved the PST to oppose the referendum. From this first consideration, the anti-xenophobic motive becomes essential. Fighting the xenophobic and reactionary intents of the radical right, AGT! speaks in favour of international solidarity. Similar reproaches are addressed to the referendum: if it doesn't convey xenophobic purposes, it is nonetheless suspected of maintaining the belief that migrants are the cause of labor grievances. Furthermore, the referendum divides the wage earners working in Switzerland according to their nationality and uses the protection of those already active here as a pretext. Such a practice can only result in weakening a common struggle. AGT! condemns even more resolutely the national preference criterion and the quota policy proposed in Geneva by its ancient ally of the AdG, the Indépendants. Their initiative mentioned above is firmly censured as a xenophobic reflex. Finally, although equally very partially convinced of the protocol's rightfulness, SolidaritéS and OSL underline the uselessness of the referendum. The signatures gathered by the radical right represent by far the largest part of the support for the referendum, compared to the 15% collected by the leftist militants. In consequence, the referendum is a product of the nationalist right. In the case of a success, renegotiation of the protocol would certainly not be improved in the way expected by the left. Quite the opposite: as masters of the game, rightist groups would set tougher dispositions against foreigners and maintain liberalization. Therefore, SolidaritéS and OSL consider the goal of the leftist referendum not only hypothetical but also unrealistic.

As the AGT! members suggest a critical acceptance of the protocol, they put forward a range of concrete demands, analogous to those expressed by the opposed leftist camp: elaboration of a status or contract-type at the request of the trade unions, obligation for employers to communicate basic information to the tripartite commissions, etc. In 2004 already, the national representative Pierre Vanek introduces a parliamentary initiative to promote the facilitated extension of collective agreements, the introduction of a fixed minimum wage and the cancellation of abusive lay-offs of union representatives[13]. Another strategy to make similar requests consists in addressing resolutions to federal and cantonal legislative institutions. The regularization of undocumented workers constitutes another goal.

Final considerations on this intense debate

Considering these diverse positions, it appears that a consensus exists on the definition of globalization and its socio-economic effects. Durable competition between workers on a worldwide scale represents a specific feature having direct and negative implications on the national scene. The two camps agree in denouncing the worsening of work conditions under the pressure of globalization and in willing to improve them; the concrete claims and proposals they put forward, such as acting in accordance with union rights in the workplace, are very similar. Despite these similarities, the case study described above shows two factions divided on the matter of what response to give to the extension of the free movement of people. Two reasons can explain the situation.

First, the issue at stake goes beyond a mere acceptance or rejection of the protocol. It involves deep principles and raises a range of wider questions. Therefore, concentrated on economic issues, the leftist refusal of the protocol echoes a more general rejection of the "International of exploitation" as well as the profit argument. It must be understood as an appeal for cohesive mobilisations and a comprehensive view of human rights. The result of the vote

doesn't only concern the current agreement: it has consequences for the whole social issue. As for the leftist approval of the protocol, it sends a broad rallying message, as political argumentation has priority. It has to be interpreted as a "critical yes"[14] different from the "bourgeois yes" of the economic and nationalist groups, and from the "yes" of the believers in a mythic social Europe[15]. An integrative practice and equal rights for Swiss and migrants are a condition for the acceptance.

Second, if perception and criticisms reveal similarities, the logic of mobilization constitutes the source of disagreement. The side supporting the referendum considers that mobilization must occur before the vote. Pressure must be exerted on employers and politicians keen on signing the treaty : "Le rôle clef des syndicats et des salarié-e-s lors d'une votation sur ce sujet leur donne une occasion rare de négocier dans un meilleur rapport de force que d'habitude, face à un patronat qui tient absolument à ces accords bilatéraux. Et d'arracher un vrai renforcement des droits collectifs de l'ensemble des salarié-e-s."[16] The analysis demonstrates that the referendum group adopts an "upstream" strategy: conditions must be set and determination shown before the protocol enters in force. Preventing measures are at the heart of its strategy. The protocol should become effective once an enhancement of employment law is assured. On the contrary, the leftist organizations accepting the treaty follow a "downstream" strategy. If the measures are not fulfilled – which they predict – then there will still be time to activate a unitary protest movement and to mobilize for a referendum. Besides, the acceptance of the treaty is concluded with reserve: "Notre soutien à 'L'Accord d'extension de la libre circulation des personnes' va de pair avec un engagement à agir, à tous les niveaux, contre les licenciements et les délocalisations ainsi que contre toutes les pressions à la baisse des salaires et des conditions de travail (chômage, flexibilisation, dumping salarial)."[17] The struggle in the name of the workers' rights has already been launched, anticipating a disappointment. A few days before the vote, SolidaritéS notices "Mais surtout, le 26 septembre nous serons au rendez-vous des batailles sociales et syndicales qu'on nous impose et qui s'imposent…"[18]

In the end, 56% of Swiss voters approved the protocol that came into force in 2006. Observing these antagonistic strategies, it isn't surprising that the camps misunderstand each other. Those that were disappointed by the result held trade unions and part of the political left responsible for having missed a unique opportunity to constrain employers' practices and policies. The others had difficulty in tolerating the fact that leftist groups could favour a referendum mainly supported by xenophobic organizations.

Finally, signs such as the social movement ATTAC giving no voting instructions show the ambiguity of the issue and how difficulty it is to find the "appropriate" alterglobalist attitude, consistent with the discourse on globalization. Likewise, the OSL lets its members choose freely and doesn't give much attention to the vote. While the organization has a clear preference for respecting the free movement of people and for acceptance of the agreement, it nevertheless considers the protocol to be a farce.

Conclusion

Rather than trying to produce an overall view of the far left organizations, we should take the singularity of each one into account as suggested by the above empirical example. One surprising result of the analysis is the large heterogeneity that predominates. Beyond a common set of ethics, almost every organization follows its own logics, especially concerning the selected strategies. As Brochier and Delouche (2000 : 68) notice: " (…) l'extrême gauche politique donne aujourd'hui l'impression d'une constellation dont chaque étoile aurait réagi différemment à la même catastrophe cosmique, celle d'un changement d'âge géopolitique, d'une mutation du capitalisme, et d'une réduction, pour la première fois depuis des décennies, de l'espoir de voir vivre la prochaine génération dans un monde meilleur." The organizations

have replied to the main changes mentioned at the beginning of this paper in a spread out way according to their realities, age and wisdom (Brochier and Delouche 2000: 44). Thus, the attempt to generalize or subsume the far left currents in Switzerland is truly a complex task. Studying party responses to the decline of voter loyalties, considered as a major change within the electoral market, Mair et al. (2004: 9) conclude that "parties obviously have a large menu to choose from when determining how they will respond to the various electoral changes, and among the different polities (…) and even among the different parties in any given polity, a wide range of responses can be seen." The considerable variation in perception of any phenomenon and in reactions to it, from one country to another, from one party to another, and so on, thus seems quite a natural and widespread characteristic. Consequently the significant differences dividing the far left should not be interpreted as a strict particular feature of this political category. Nevertheless, as unity lacks in the national context, these political organizations face problems in organizing themselves at the international level as well. And in facing globalization, the wealth of diversity is transformed into a handicap of fragmentation. A scattered opposition can hardly find efficient means to resist the powerful forces of globalization, not to mention the difficulty fighting global politics with national means and at the national scale. As Held and McGrew (2002: 68) underline, social and militant actors don't occupy a privileged position in the global order: "(…) by far the majority of transnational movements and NGOs lack the kinds of economic, financial or political resources that most states and multinational companies can draw on."

As a conclusion, one might observe that a typology is of no help to understand far left organizations in such a context. If we had nevertheless to rely on a classification, the ones of Crettiez and Sommier (2002) and of Bourseiller (2006) would be the most satisfying. These synchronic models include the ideological and organizational criteria, and consider the different political cultures to which these organizations belong. Roughly, a first division separates the "traditional communist parties" bound to the real existing Eastern European socialism and the "extreme left", the communist left opposed to official communism. This last one is then divided between the "Leninist currents" and the "spontaneous currents". However, as we have seen, real political tensions and discrepancies can tear a political family apart. Taking the Swiss extreme left family as an example, we notice that the MPS on one side and SolidaritéS on the other side have adopted dissimilar views and answers on the extension of the free movement of people. Moreover, the break up of the AdG coalition reveals the intensity of the debates within the far left. This concrete situation shows how difficult it is to build a valid typology. On this campaign SolidaritéS, the extreme left component of AGT!, acts together with the communist PST and finds a potential new ally in the spontaneous group OSL. At the same time, it distances itself from latent or traditional partners, respectively MPS and Indépendants. The example of the additional protocol to the Bilateral Agreements suggests two comments[19]. First, leftist coalitions can be successful under certain circumstances but remain highly subject to change. Second, it is almost impossible to confine real organizations in strict theoretical categories.

Theoretical insights and arguments of the protagonists can enlighten us on this evolution and these different practices. The cleavage identified by Bourseiller (2006) between the "modernists" and the "invariants" could eventually explain the divergence between SolidaritéS and the MPS. The former would evolve according to the socio-political context in the direction of post-materialist values' integration, tolerance of intern tendencies, discussion on the doctrine, etc; while the latter would appear firmer on its programmatic and theoretical bases: intangibility of the original line, focus on the materialist issues, etc. Contextual and structural reasons equally help to understand how hard it is to achieve a common action. A few phenomena act as a brake on such movements: growing unemployment, social precariousness, withdrawal of mobilisation ideologies, diminishing of "classical" strategies

like strikes, and depoliticization of grand questions. The tradition of plurality characteristic of Switzerland in terms of parties or social and linguistic cleavages could also partly explain this diversity.

In the end, whatever the explanation advanced and however big the difficulties, political organizations of the far left seem determined to challenge a globalization perceived as inequitable as can be seen by the recent involvements on several issues like the taxation policy or meetings of economic powers.

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[1] As noticed by Lagroye (2002), the distinction between political and non-political organizations is a social construct and the relation between the two forms is permanent.

[2] Social-democracy is partially characterized by its reformist orientation and its adhesion to the principle of rectification (Lazar 1996) suggesting, for example, that unjustified inequalities have to be fought within the boundaries of the current system.

[3] *Rebellion*, files, September 2002.

[4] For practical reasons, we have added a few criteria, like the presence of the organization in at least three cantons and the necessity to position oneself on globalization. For this analysis, organizations' own sources were studied: reviews available online (*Gauchebdo*, *SolidaritéS*, *La Brèche*, *A l'encontre*, *Rebellion*) and sites (see the bibliography). Organisations' names are given in French, as it is the author's mother tongue.

[5] *Rebellion*, September 2002.

[6] There are as many projects as there are organizations, but we present here a summarized version based on the minimal common denominators.

[7] *Rebellion*, September 2001.

[8] Site PST, "Traité constitutionnel : un Non d'espoir" May 30, 2005.

[9] *SolidaritéS* (56) September 25, 2004.

[10] *La Brèche* (16) September 2005.

[11] *La Brèche* (17) October 2005.

[12] *Gauchebdo* (2) January 14, 2005. The cantonal initiative has been abandoned because of a lack of signatures expected by the deadline.

[13] The national council rejected the parliamentary initiative Vanek on June 13, 2006 by 117 votes against 65 votes.

[14] *Solidarités* (70) July 5, 2005.

[15] *Solidarités* (73) September 6, 2005.

[16] *La Brèche* (14-15) July-August 2005.

[17] Unitary call "Abattre tous les murs…" June 20, 2005.

[18] *SolidaritéS* (73) September 6, 2005.

[19] Other empirical cases should be examined to provide a broader picture and a more definitive conclusion. The preliminary results presented here are part of a wider research project which will include more cases and different dimensions.

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