THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM:

TOWARD A COUNTER-HEGEMONIC GLOBALIZATION

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Introduction[*]

The World Social Forum (WSF) is a new social and political phenomenon. The fact that it does have antecedents does not diminish its newness, quite the opposite. The WSF is not an event. Nor is it a mere succession of events, although it does try to dramatize the formal meetings it promotes. It is not a scholarly conference, although the contributions of many scholars converge in it. It is not a party or an international of parties, although militants and activists of many parties all over the world take part in it. It is not a nongovernmental organization or a confederation of nongovernmental organizations, even though its conception and organization owes a great deal to nongovernmental organizations. It is not a social movement, even though it often designates itself as the movement of movements. Although it presents itself as an agent of social change, the WSF rejects the concept of an historical subject and confers no priority on any specific social actor in this process of social change. It holds no clearly defined ideology, either in defining what it rejects or what it asserts. Given that the WSF conceives of itself as a struggle against neoliberal globalization, is it a struggle against a form of capitalism or against capitalism in general? Given that it sees itself as a struggle against discrimination, exclusion and oppression, does the success of its struggle presuppose a postcapitalist, socialist, anarchist horizon, or, on the contrary, does it presuppose that no context be clearly defined at all? Given that the vast majority of people taking part in the WSF identify themselves as favoring a politics of the left, how many definitions of "the left" fit the WSF? And what about those who refuse to be defined because they believe that the

left-right dichotomy is a northcentric or westcentric particularism, and look for alternative political definitions? The social struggles that find expression in the WSF do not adequately fit either of the ways of social change sanctioned by western modernity: reform and revolution. Aside from the consensus on nonviolence, its modes of struggle are extremely diverse and appear spread out in a continuum between the poles of institutionality and insurgency. Even the concept of nonviolence is open to widely disparate interpretations. Finally, the WSF is not structured according to any of the models of modern political organization, be they democratic centralism, representative democracy, or participatory democracy. Nobody represents it or is allowed to speak in its name, let alone make decisions, even though it sees itself as a forum that facilitates the decisions of the movements and organizations that take part in it.[1]

These features are arguably not new, as they are associated with what is conventionally called "new social movements". The truth is, however, that these movements, be they local, national, or global, are thematic. Themes, while fields of concrete political confrontation, compel definition – hence polarization – whether regarding strategies or tactics, whether regarding organizational forms or forms of struggle. Themes work, therefore, both as attraction and repulsion. Now, what is new about the WSF is the fact that it is inclusive, both as concerns its scale and its thematics. What is new is the whole it constitutes, not its constitutive parts. The WSF is global in its harboring local, national and global movements, and in its being inter-thematic and even trans-thematic. That is to say, since the conventional factors of attraction and repulsion do not work as far as the WSF is concerned, either it develops other strong factors of attraction and repulsion or does without them, and may even derive its strength from their nonexistence. In other

[1] For a better understanding of the political character and goals of the World Social Forum, see the Charter of Principles, available at http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br.

words, the "movement of movements" is not one more movement. It is a different movement.

The problem with new social movements is that in order to do them justice a new social theory and new analytical concepts are called for. Since neither the one nor the others emerge easily from the inertia of the disciplines, the risk that they may be undertheorized and undervalued is considerable. This risk is all the more serious as the WSF, given its scope and internal diversity, not only challenges the various disciplines of the conventional social sciences, but challenges as well scientific knowledge as sole producer of social and political rationality. To put it another way, the WSF raises not only analytical and theoretical questions, but also epistemological questions. This much is expressed in the idea, widely shared by WSF participants, that there will be no global social justice without global cognitive justice. But the challenge posed by the WSF has one more dimension still. Beyond the theoretical, analytical and epistemological questions, it raises a new political issue: it aims to fulfill utopia in a world devoid of utopias. This utopian will is expressed in the following way: "another world is possible." At stake is less a utopian world than a world that allows for utopia. In this paper, I deal with the WSF as critical utopia, epistemology of the South, and cosmopolitan politics.

1. The World Social Forum as Critical Utopia

Ernst Bloch says that "utopias have their timetable" (1995: 479). The conceptions of and aspirations to a better life and society, ever present in human history, vary as to form and content according to time and space. They express the tendencies and latencies of a given epoch and a given society. They constitute an anticipatory consciousness that

manifests itself by enlarging the signs or traces of emerging realities. It is therefore appropriate to ask: does the WSF have a utopian dimension? And, if so, what is its timetable?

The WSF is the set of initiatives of transnational exchange among social movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their practices and knowledges of local, national or global social struggles against the forms of exclusion and inclusion, discrimination and equality, universalism and particularism, cultural imposition and relativism, brought about or made possible by the current phase of capitalism known as neoliberal globalization.

The utopian dimension of the WSF consists in claiming the existence of alternatives to neoliberal globalization. As Franz Hinkelammert says, we live in a time of conservative utopias whose utopian character resides in its radical denial of alternatives to present-day reality. The possibility of alternatives is discredited precisely for being utopian, idealistic, unrealistic. In the last one hundred years, Hinkelammert distinguishes three conservative utopias: Stalinism, Nazism, and neoliberalism (combined with neoconservatism and Christian fundamentalism). All of them are sustained by a political logic based on one sole efficiency criterion that rapidly becomes a supreme ethical criterion. According to this criterion, only what is efficient has value. Any other ethical criterion is devalued as inefficient. Under Stalinism, the one efficiency criterion was the plan, or planned economy. Under Nazism, the criterion was racial superiority. Under neoliberalism, the criterion is the market, or the laws of the market. In the latter case, the total market becomes a perfect institution. Its utopian character resides in the promise that its total fulfillment or application cancels out all utopias. As Hinkelammert says, "this ideology derives from its frantic anti-utopianism, the utopian promise of a new world. The basic thesis is: whoever destroys utopia, fulfills it" (2002: 278). What characterizes conservative utopias and

distinguishes them from critical utopias is the fact that they identify themselves with the present-day reality and discover their utopian dimension in the radicalization or complete fulfillment of the present. The problems or difficulties of present-day reality are not the consequence of the deficiencies or limits of the efficiency criteria, but result rather from the fact that the application of the efficiency criteria has not been thorough enough. If there is unemployment and social exclusion, if there is starvation and death in the periphery of the world system, that is not the consequence of the deficiencies or limits of the laws of the market; it results rather from the fact that such laws have not yet been fully applied. The horizon of conservative utopias is thus a closed horizon, an end to history.

This is the context in which the utopian dimension of the WSF must be understood. The WSF signifies the reemergence of a critical utopia, that is to say, the radical critique of present-day reality and the aspiration to a better society. This occurs, however, when the anti-utopian utopia of neoliberalism is dominant. The specificity of the utopian content of this new critical utopia, when compared with that of the critical utopias prevailing at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, thus becomes clear. The anti-utopian utopia of neoliberalism is grounded on two presuppositions: the illusion of total control over present-day reality by means of extremely efficient powers and knowledges; and the radical rejection of alternatives to the *status quo*. The WSF puts in question the totality of control (whether as knowledge or power) only to affirm credibly the possibility of alternatives. Hence the open nature, vague if you will, of alternatives. In a context in which the conservative utopia prevails absolutely, it is better to affirm the possibility of alternatives than to define them. The utopian dimension of the WSF consists in affirming the possibility of a counter-hegemonic globalization. In other words, the utopia of the WSF asserts itself more as negativity (the definition of what it critiques) than as positivity (the definition of that to which it aspires). The specificity of the WSF as critical utopia has one

more explanation. The WSF is the first critical utopia of the twenty-first century and aims to break with the tradition of the critical utopias of western modernity, many of which turned into conservative utopias: from claiming utopian alternatives to denying alternatives under the excuse that the fulfillment of utopia was under way. The openness of the utopian dimension of the WSF is its attempt to escape this perversion. For the WSF, the claim of alternatives is plural, both as to the form of the claim and the content of the alternatives. The affirmation of alternatives goes hand in hand with the affirmation that there are alternatives to the alternatives. The other possible world is a utopian aspiration that comprises several possible worlds. The other possible world may be many things, but never a world with no alternative.

The utopia of the WSF is a radically democratic utopia. It is the only realistic utopia after a century of conservative utopias, some of them the result of perverted critical utopias. This utopian design, grounded on the denial of the present rather than the definition of the future, focused on the processes of intercourse among the movements rather than an assessment of the movements' political content, is the major factor of cohesion of the WSF. It helps to maximize what unites and minimize what divides, celebrate intercourse rather than dispute power, be a strong presence rather than an agenda. This utopian design, which is also an ethical design, privileges the ethical discourse, quite clear in the WSF's Charter of Principles, aimed at gathering consensuses beyond the ideological and political cleavages among the movements and organizations that compose it. The movements and organizations put between brackets the cleavages that divide them, as much as is necessary to affirm the possibility of a counter-hegemonic globalization.

The nature of this utopia has been the most adequate for the initial objective of the WSF: to affirm the existence of a counter-hegemonic globalization. This is no vague utopia. It is rather a utopia that contains in itself the concretization that is adequate for this

phase of the construction of counter-hegemonic globalization. It remains to be seen if the nature of this utopia is the most adequate one to guide the next steps, should there be any next steps. Once the counter-hegemonic globalization is consolidated, and hence the idea that another world is possible is made credible, will it be possible to fulfill this idea with the same level of radical democracy that helped formulate it? I shall come back to this.

2. The World Social Forum as Epistemology of the South

The practices and knowledges circulating in the WSF have their origin in very distinct epistemological and ontological universes. Such diversity exists not only among the different movements but also inside each one of them. The differences within the feminist movement, for instance, are not merely political. They are differences regarding what counts as relevant knowledge, on the one hand, and, on the other, differences about identifying, validating or hierarchizing the relations between western-based scientific knowledge and other knowledges derived from other practices, rationalities or cultural universes. They are differences, ultimately, about what it means to be a human being, whether male or female. The practice of the WSF reveals, in this context, that the knowledge we have of globalization is much less global than globalization itself. Neoliberal globalization is presided over by technico-scientific knowledge, and owes its hegemony to the credible way in which it discredits all rival knowledges, by suggesting that they are not comparable, as to efficiency and coherence, to the scientificity of the market laws. Since neoliberal globalization is hegemonic, no wonder that it anchors itself in the knowledge, no less hegemonic, of western-based modern science.

The counter-hegemonic globalization to which the WSF aspires thus immediately confronts itself with the epistemological problem of the validity of that same scientific knowledge to advance the counter-hegemonic struggles. To be sure, many counter-hegemonic practices resort to the hegemonic scientific and technological knowledge, and many of them would not even be thinkable without it. This is true of the WSF itself, which would not exist without the technologies of information and communication. The question is to what extent such knowledge is useful and valid, and what other knowledges are available and usable beyond the limits of utility and validity of scientific knowledge. To approach these problems raises an additional epistemological problem, indeed a meta-epistemological problem: on the basis of which knowledge or epistemology are these problems to be formulated?

The core idea that presides over the epistemological questioning provoked by the WSF is that the knowledge of globalization, whether hegemonic or counter-hegemonic, is less global than each kind of globalization itself. Scientific knowledge, however supposedly universal, is concentrated in the countries of the developed North and, however presumably neutral, promotes the interests of these countries and constitutes one of the productive forces of neoliberal globalization. Science is doubly at the service of hegemonic globalization, whether by the way in which it promotes and legitimates it, or by the way in which it discredits, conceals or trivializes counter-hegemonic globalization. Hegemony presupposes a constant policing and repressing of counter-hegemonic practices and agents. Discrediting, concealing and trivializing counter-hegemonic globalization go largely hand in hand with discrediting, concealing and trivializing the knowledges that inform counter-hegemonic practices and agents. Faced with rival knowledges, hegemonic scientific knowledge either turns them into raw material (as is the case of indigenous or peasant

knowledge about biodiversity) or rejects them on the basis of their falsity or inefficiency in the light of the hegemonic criteria of truth and efficiency.[2]

The epistemological alternative proposed by the WSF is that there is no global social justice without global cognitive justice. This alternative is grounded on two basic ideas. First, if the objectivity of science does not imply neutrality, science and technology may as well be put at the service of counter-hegemonic practices. The extent to which science is used is in general arguable inside the movements, and it may vary according to circumstances and practices. Second, whatever the extent to which science is resorted to, counter-hegemonic practices are mainly practices of nonscientific knowledges, practical, often tacit knowledges that must be made credible to render such practices credible in turn.

This second point is more polemical because it confronts the hegemonic concepts of truth and efficiency directly. The epistemological denunciation that the WSF engages in consists in showing that the concepts of rationality and efficiency presiding over hegemonic technico-scientific knowledge are too restrictive to capture the richness and diversity of the social experience of the world, and specially that they discriminate against practices of resistance and production of counter-hegemonic alternatives. Hegemonic rationality and efficiency thus bring about a contraction of the world by concealing or discrediting all the practices, agents, and knowledges that are not accounted for by their criteria. Such concealment and such discrediting constitute a waste of social experience, both social experience that is already available but not yet visible, and social experience not yet available but realistically possible.

The epistemological operation carried out by the WSF consists of two processes that I designate as sociology of absences and sociology of emergences (Santos, 2002a). I mean sociologies built against hegemonic social sciences and upon alternative epistemological

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[2] On this subject, see also Santos, 1995, 2000, 2003a.

presuppositions. I speak of sociologies because my aim is critically to identify the conditions that destroy nonhegemonic and potentially counter-hegemonic social experience. Through the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences, social experience that resists destruction is unconcealed, and the space-time capable of identifying and rendering credible new counter-hegemonic social experiences is opened up.

The following description of the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences represents the ideal-type of the epistemological operation featured by the WSF. In real life, the practices and knowledges of the different movements and organizations, as well as of the global interactions amongst them, come more or less close to this ideal-type.

2.1 The World Social Forum and the sociology of absences

The *sociology of absences* consists of an inquiry that aims to explain that what does not exist is in fact actively produced as nonexistent, that is, as a noncredible alternative to what exists. Its empirical object is deemed impossible in the light of conventional social science, and for this reason its formulation already represents a break with it. The objective of the sociology of absences is to transform impossible into possible objects, absent into present objects.

There is no single, univocal way of not existing. The logics and processes through which hegemonic criteria of rationality and efficiency produce the nonexistence of what does not fit them are various. Nonexistence is produced whenever a certain entity is disqualified and rendered invisible, unintelligible, or irreversibly discardable. What unites the different logics of production of nonexistence is that they are all manifestations of the

same rational monoculture. I distinguish five logics or modes of production of nonexistence.

The first derives from the monoculture of *knowledge* and *rigor of knowledge*. It is the most powerful mode of production of nonexistence. It consists in turning modern science and high culture into the sole criteria of truth and aesthetic quality, respectively. The complicity that unites the "two cultures" resides in the fact that both claim to be, each in its own field, exclusive canons of production of knowledge or artistic creation. All that is not recognized or legitimated by this canon is declared nonexistent. Nonexistence appears in this case in the form of ignorance or lack of culture.

The second logic resides in the *monoculture of linear time*, the idea that history has a unique and well known meaning and direction. This meaning and direction have been formulated in different ways in the last two hundred years: progress, revolution, modernization, development, globalization. Common to all these formulations is the idea that time is linear and that ahead of time proceed the core countries of the world system and, along with them, the dominant knowledges, institutions and forms of sociability. This logic produces nonexistence by describing as backward whatever is asymmetrical vis-à-vis whatever is declared forward. It is according to this logic that western modernity produces the noncontemporaneity of the contemporaneous, and that the idea of simultaneity conceals the asymmetries of the historical times that converge into it. The encounter between the African peasant and the officer of the World Bank in his field trip illustrates this condition. In this case, nonexistence assumes the form of residuum, which in turn has assumed many designations for the past two hundred years, the first being the primitive, closely followed by the traditional, the premodern, the simple, the obsolete, the underdeveloped.

The third logic is the logic of social classification, based on the monoculture of *naturalization of differences*. It consists in distributing populations according to categories

that naturalize hierarchies. Racial and sexual classifications are the most salient manifestations of this logic. Contrary to what happens in the relation between capital and labor, social classification is based on attributes that negate the intentionality of social hierarchy. The relation of domination is the consequence, rather than the cause, of this hierarchy, and it may even be considered as an obligation of whoever is classified as superior (for example, the white man's burden in his civilizing mission). Although the two forms of classification (race and sex) are decisive for the relation between capital and labor to stabilize and spread globally, racial classification was the one most deeply reconstructed by capitalism, as Wallerstein and Balibar (1991) and Quijano (2000), among others, have shown.[3] According to this logic, nonexistence is produced as a form of inferiority, insuperable inferiority because natural. The inferior ones, because insuperably inferior, cannot be a credible alternative to the superior ones.

The forth logic of production of nonexistence is the *logic of the dominant scale*: the monoculture of the universal and of the global. According to this logic, the scale adopted as primordial determines the irrelevance of all other possible scales. In western modernity, the dominant scale appears under two different forms: the universal and the global. Universalism is the scale of the entities or realities that prevail regardless of specific contexts. For that reason, they take precedence over all other realities that depend on contexts and are therefore considered particular or vernacular. Globalization is the scale that in the last twenty years acquired unprecedented relevance in various social fields. It is the scale that privileges entities or realities that widen their scope to the whole globe, thus earning the prerogative to designate rival entities as local. According to this logic, nonexistence is produced under the form of the particular and the local. The entities or

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[3] Quijano considers the racialization of power relations as an intrinsic feature of capitalism, a feature that he designates as the "coloniality of power" (2000: 374).

realities defined as particular or local are captured in scales that render them incapable of being credible alternatives to what exists globally and universally.

Finally, the fifth logic of nonexistence is the *logic of productivity*. It resides in the monoculture of the criteria of capitalist productivity and efficiency. According to this logic, economic growth through market forces is an unquestionable rational objective. As such, the criterion of productivity that best serves this objective is unquestionable as well. This criterion applies both to nature and to human labor. Productive nature is nature at its maximum fertility in a given production cycle, whereas productive labor is labor that maximizes generating profit likewise in a given production cycle. In its extreme version of conservative utopia neoliberalism aims to convert labor into a productive force among other, subject to the laws of the market as any other productive force. It has been doing this by transforming labor into a global resource while at the same time preventing at any cost the emergence of a global labor market (via immigration laws, violation of labor standards, union busting, etc.) According to the logic of capitalist productivity, nonexistence is produced in the form of nonproductiveness. Applied to nature, nonproductiveness is sterility; applied to labor, "discardable populations", laziness, professional disqualification, lack of skills.

There are thus five principal social forms of nonexistence produced by hegemonic epistemology and rationality: the ignorant, the residual, the inferior, the local, and the nonproductive. They are social forms of nonexistence because the realities to which they give shape are present only as obstacles vis-à-vis the realities deemed relevant, be they scientific, advanced, superior, global, or productive realities. They are, therefore, disqualified parts of homogeneous totalities which, as such, merely confirm what exists and precisely as it exists. They are what exists under irretrievably disqualified forms of existing.

The social production of these absences results in the waste of social experience. The sociology of absences aims to identify the scope of this waste so that the experiences produced as absent may be liberated from those relations of production and thereby made present. To be made present means to be considered alternatives to hegemonic experience, to have their credibility discussed and argued for and their relations taken as object of political dispute. The sociology of absences aims thus to create a want and turn the supposed lack of social experience into waste of social experience. It thereby creates the conditions to enlarge the field of credible experiences in this world and time. The enlargement of the world occurs not only because the field of credible experiences is widened but also because the possibilities of social experimentation in the future are increased.

The sociology of absences proceeds by confronting each one of the modes of production of absence mentioned above. Because the latter have been shaped by conventional social science, the sociology of absences cannot but be transgressive, and as such bound to be discredited. Nonconformity with such discredit and struggle for credibility, however, make it possible for the sociology of absences not to remain an absent sociology. The sociology of absences works by replacing monocultures by ecologies. I therefore identify five ecologies.

The ecology of knowledges. The first logic, the logic of the monoculture of scientific knowledge and rigor, must be confronted with the identification of other knowledges and criteria of rigor that operate credibly in social practices. Such contextual credibility must be deemed a sufficient condition for the knowledge in question to have enough legitimacy to participate in epistemological debates with other knowledges, namely with scientific knowledge. The central idea of the sociology of absences in this regard is that there is no ignorance or knowledge in general. All ignorance is ignorant of a certain knowledge, and

all knowledge is the overcoming of a particular ignorance (Santos, 1995: 25). This principle of incompleteness of all knowledges is the condition of the possibility of epistemological dialogue and debate among the different knowledges. What each knowledge contributes to such a dialogue is the way in which it leads a certain practice to overcome a certain ignorance. Confrontation and dialogue among knowledges is confrontation and dialogue among the different processes through which practices that are ignorant in different ways turn into practices that are knowledgeable in different ways.

In this domain, the sociology of absences aims to substitute an ecology of knowledges for the monoculture of scientific knowledge. Such an ecology of knowledges permits not only to overcome the monoculture of scientific knowledge but also the idea that the nonscientific knowledges are alternatives to scientific knowledge. The idea of alternatives presupposes the idea of normalcy, and the latter the idea of norm, and so, nothing being further specified, the designation of something as an alternative carries a latent connotation of subalternity. If we take biomedicine and African traditional medicine as an example, it makes no sense to consider the latter, by far the predominant one in Africa, as an alternative to the former. The important thing is to identify the contexts and the practices in which each operates, and the way they conceive of health and sickness and overcome ignorance (as undiagnosed illness) in applied knowledge (as cure).

The ecology of temporalities. The second logic, the logic of the monoculture of linear time, is confronted with the idea that linear time is only one among many conceptions of time and that, if we take the world as our unit of analysis, it is not even the most commonly adopted. The predominance of linear time is not the result of its primacy as a temporal conception, but the result of the primacy of western modernity that embraced it as its own. Linear time was adopted by western modernity through the secularization of Judeo-Christian eschatology, but it never erased, not even in the West, other conceptions of time

such as circular time, cyclical time, the doctrine of the eternal return, and still others that are not adequately grasped by the images of the arrow of time.

The need to take into account these different conceptions of time derives from the fact, pointed out by Koselleck (1985) and Marramao (1985), that societies understand power according to the conceptions of temporality they hold. The most resistant relations of domination are those based on hierarchies among temporalities. They reduce much social experience to the condition of residuum. Experiences become residual because they are contemporary in ways that are not recognizable by the dominant temporality.

In this domain, the sociology of absences aims to free social practices from their status as residuum, devolving to them their own temporality and thus the possibility of autonomous development. Once liberated from linear time and devolved to its own temporality, the activity of the African or Asian peasant stops being residual and becomes contemporaneous of the activity of the *hi-tech* farmer in the USA or the activity of the World Bank executive. By the same token, the presence or relevance of the ancestors in one's life in different cultures ceases to be an anachronistic manifestation of primitive religion or magic to become another way of experiencing contemporaneity.

By freeing alternative realities from their status as residuum, the sociology of absences replaces the monoculture of linear time with the ecology of temporalities. Societies are constituted of various temporalities. Many practices are disqualified, suppressed or rendered unintelligible because they are ruled by temporalities that are not contained in the temporal canon of western capitalist modernity. Once these temporalities are recuperated and become known, the practices and sociabilities ruled by them become intelligible and credible objects of argumentation and political debate.

The ecology of recognitions. The third logic of production of absences is the logic of social classification. Although in all logics of production of absence the disqualification of

practices goes hand in hand with the disqualification of agents, it is here that the disqualification affects mainly the agents, and only secondly the social experience of which they are the protagonists. The coloniality of western modern capitalist power mentioned by Quijano (2000) consists in collapsing difference and inequality, while claiming the privilege to ascertain who is equal or different. The same can be said of the unequal sexuality of modern capitalist power. The sociology of absences confronts coloniality and unequal sexuality by looking for a new articulation between the principles of equality and difference, thus allowing for the possibility of equal differences — an ecology of differences comprised of mutual recognition. It does so by submitting hierarchy to critical ethnography (Santos, 2001a). This consists in deconstructing both difference (to what extent is difference a product of hierarchy?) and hierarchy (to what extent is hierarchy a product of difference?). The differences that remain when hierarchy vanishes become a powerful denunciation of the differences that hierarchy reclaims in order not to vanish.

The ecology of trans-scales. The sociology of absences confronts the fourth logic, the logic of global scale, by recuperating what in the local is not the result of hegemonic globalization. The local that has been integrated in hegemonic globalization is what I designate as localized globalism, that is, the specific impact of hegemonic globalization on the local (Santos, 1998; 2000). As it deglobalizes the local vis-à-vis hegemonic globalization, the sociology of absences also explores the possibility of counter-hegemonic globalization. In sum, the deglobalization of the local and its eventual counter-hegemonic reglobalization broadens the diversity of social practices by offering alternatives to localized globalisms. The sociology of absences requires in this domain the use of cartographic imagination, whether to see in each scale of representation not only what it reveals but also what it conceals, or to deal with cognitive maps that operate

simultaneously with different scales, namely to identify local/global articulations (Santos, 1995: 456-473; Santos, 2001b).

The ecology of productivities. Finally, in the domain of the fifth logic, the monoculture of capitalist productivity, the sociology of absences consists in recuperating and valorizing alternative systems of production, popular economic organizations, workers' cooperatives, self-managed enterprises, solidarity economy, etc., which have been hidden or discredited by the capitalist orthodoxy of productivity. This is perhaps the most controversial domain of the sociology of absences, for it confronts directly both the paradigm of development and infinite economic growth and the logic of the primacy of the objectives of accumulation over the objectives of distribution that sustain global capitalism.

In each of the five domains, the objective of the sociology of absences is to disclose the diversity and multiplicity of social practices and confer credit to them in opposition to the exclusive credibility of hegemonic practices. The idea of multiplicity and nondestructive relations is suggested by the concept of ecology: ecology of knowledges, ecology of temporalities, ecology of recognitions, ecology of transcales, and ecology of productivities. Common to all these ecologies is the idea that reality cannot be reduced to what exists. It amounts to an ample version of realism that includes the realities rendered absent by silence, suppression, and marginalization. In a word, realities that are actively produced as nonexistent.

In conclusion, the exercise of the sociology of absences is counterfactual and takes place by confronting conventional scientific commonsense. To be carried out it demands, both epistemological imagination and democratic imagination. Epistemological imagination allows for the recognition of different knowledges, perspectives and scales of identification, analysis and evaluation of practices. Democratic imagination allows for the recognition of different practices and social agents. Both the epistemological and the

democratic imagination have a deconstructive and a reconstructive dimension. Deconstruction assumes five forms, corresponding to the critique of the five logics of hegemonic rationality, namely un-thinking, de-residualizing, de-racializing, de-localizing, and de-producing. Reconstruction is comprised of the five ecologies mentioned above.

The WSF is a broad exercise of the sociology of absences. As I pointed out, it is internally unequal as to its closeness to the ideal-type. If it is in general unequivocally noticeable a refusal of monocultures and an adoption of ecologies, this process is not present with the same intensity in all movements, organizations, and articulations. If by some opting for ecologies is unconditional, by others hybridity between monocultures and ecologies are visible. It is often the case, as well, that some movements or organizations act, in some domains, according to a monocultural logic and, in others, according to an ecological logic. It is also possible that the adoption of an ecological logic is decharacterized by the faccionalism and power struggle inside one movement or organization, and turn into a new monocultural logic. Finally, I offer as an hypothesis that even the movements that claim different ecologies are vulnerable to the temptation of evaluating themselves according to an ecological logic, while evaluating the other movements according to a hegemonic monocultural logic.

2.2 The World Social Forum and the sociology of emergences

The sociology of emergences is the second epistemological operation conducted by the WSF. Whereas the goal of the sociology of absences is to identify and valorize social experiences available in the world, although declared nonexistent by hegemonic rationality and knowledge, the sociology of emergences aims to identify and enlarge the signs of possible future experiences, under the guise of tendencies and latencies that are actively ignored by hegemonic rationality and knowledge.

The concept that rules the sociology of emergences is the concept of Not Yet (*Noch Nicht*) advanced by Ernst Bloch (1995). Bloch takes issue with the fact that western philosophy was dominated by the concepts of All (*Alles*) and Nothing (*Nichts*), in which everything seems to be contained in latency, but from whence nothing new can emerge. Western philosophy is therefore a static philosophy. For Bloch, the possible is the most uncertain and the most ignored concept in western philosophy (1995: 241). Yet, only the possible permits to reveal the inexhaustible wealth of the world. Besides All and Nothing, Bloch introduces two new concepts: Not (*Nicht*) and Not Yet (*Noch Nicht*). The Not is the lack of something and the expression of the will to surmount that lack. The Not is thus distinguished from the Nothing (1995: 306). To say No is to say yes to something different. The Not Yet is the more complex category because it expresses what exists as mere tendency, a movement that is latent in the very process of manifesting itself. The Not Yet is the way in which the future is inscribed in the present. It is not an indeterminate or infinite future, rather a concrete possibility and a capacity that neither exist in a vacuum nor are completely predetermined. Indeed, they actively re-determine all they touch, thus questioning the determinations that exist at a given moment. Subjectively, the Not Yet is anticipatory consciousness, a form of consciousness that, although extremely important in people's lives, was completely neglected by Freud (Bloch, 1995: 286-315). Objectively, the Not Yet is, on the one hand, capacity (potency) and, on the other, possibility (potentiality). Possibility has a dimension of darkness as it originates in the lived moment, which is never fully visible to itself, as well as a component of uncertainty that derives from a double want: 1) the fact that the conditions that render possibility concrete are only partially known; 2) the fact that such conditions only exist partially. For Bloch, it is crucial to distinguish between these two wants: it is possible to know relatively well conditions

that exist only very partially, and vice-versa, it is possible that such conditions are widely present but are not recognized as such by available knowledge.

The Not Yet inscribes in the present a possibility that is uncertain, but never neutral; it could be the possibility of utopia or salvation (*Heil*) or the possibility of catastrophe or damnation (*Unheil*). Such uncertainty brings an element of chance, or danger, to every change. At every moment, there is a limited horizon of possibilities, and that is why it is important not to waste the unique opportunity of a specific change offered by the present: *carpe diem* (seize the day). Considering the three modal categories of existence — reality, necessity, and possibility — hegemonic rationality and knowledge focus on the first two and neglect the third one entirely. The sociology of emergences focuses on possibility. As Bloch says, "to be human is to have a lot ahead of you" (1995: 246). Possibility is the world's engine. Its moments are: *want* (the manifestation of something lacking), *tendency* (process and meaning), and *latency* (what goes ahead in the process). Want is the realm of the Not, tendency the realm of the Not Yet, and latency the realm the Nothing and the All, for latency can end up either in frustration or hope.

The sociology of emergences is the inquiry into the alternatives that are contained in the horizon of concrete possibilities. It consists in undertaking a symbolic enlargement of knowledges, practices and agents in order to identify therein the tendencies of the future (the Not Yet) upon which it is possible to intervene so as to maximize the probability of hope vis-à-vis the probability of frustration. Such symbolic enlargement is actually a form of sociological imagination with a double aim: on the one hand, to know better the conditions of the possibility of hope; on the other, to define principles of action to promote the fulfillment of those conditions.

The sociology of emergences acts both on possibilities (potentiality) and on capacities (potency). The Not Yet has meaning (as possibility), but no direction, for it can end either

in hope or disaster. Therefore, the sociology of emergences replaces the idea of determination by the idea of care. The axiology of progress is thus replaced by the axiology of care. Whereas in the sociology of absences the axiology of care is exerted vis-à-vis alternatives available in the present, in the sociology of emergences the axiology of care is exerted vis-à-vis possible future alternatives. Because of this ethical dimension, neither the sociology of absences nor the sociology of emergences are conventional sociologies. But they are not conventional for another reason: their objectivity depends upon the quality of their subjective dimension. The subjective element of the sociology of absences is cosmopolitan consciousness and nonconformism before the waste of experience. The subjective element of the sociology of emergences is anticipatory consciousness and nonconformism before a want whose fulfillment is within the horizon of possibilities. As Bloch says, the fundamental concepts are not reachable without a theory of the emotions (1995: 306). The Not, the Nothing, and the All shed light on such basic emotions as hunger or want, despair or annihilation, trust or redemption. One way or another, these emotions are present in the nonconformism that moves both the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences.

Whereas the sociology of absences acts in the field of social experiences, the sociology of emergences acts in the field of social expectations. The discrepancy between experiences and expectations is constitutive of western modernity. Through the concept of progress, this discrepancy has been so much polarized that any effective linkage between experiences and expectations disappeared: no matter how wretched current experiences may be, they do not preclude the illusion of exhilarating expectations. The sociology of emergences conceives of the discrepancy between experiences and expectations without resorting to the idea of progress and seeing it rather as concrete and measured. The

question is not to minimize expectations, but rather to radicalize the expectations based on real possibilities and capacities, here and now.

Modernist expectations were grandiose in the abstract, falsely infinite and universal. As such they have justified death, destruction, and disaster in the name of a redemption ever to come. With the crisis of the concept of progress, the future stopped being automatically prospective and axiological. The concepts of modernization and development diluted those characteristics almost completely. What is today known as globalization consummates the replacement of the prospective and axiological by the accelerated and entropic. Thus, direction turns into rhythm without meaning, and if there is a final stage, it cannot but be disaster. Against this nihilism, which is as empty as the triumphalism of hegemonic forces, the sociology of emergences offers a new semantics of expectations. The expectations legitimated by the sociology of emergences are both contextual, because gauged by concrete possibilities, and radical, because, in the ambit of those possibilities and capacities, they claim a strong fulfillment that protects them, though never completely, from frustration. In such expectations resides the reinvention of social emancipation, or rather emancipations.

The symbolic enlargement brought about by the sociology of emergences consists in identifying signals, clues, or traces of future possibilities in whatever exists. Hegemonic rationality and science has totally dismissed this kind of inquiry, either because it assumes that the future is predetermined, or can only be identified by precise indicators. For them, clues are too vague, subjective, and chaotic to be credible predictors. By focusing intensely on the clue side of reality, the sociology of emergences aims to enlarge symbolically the possibilities of the future that lie, in latent form, in concrete social experiences.

The notion of *clue*, understood as something that announces what is to come next, is essential in various practices, both human and animal. For example, it is well known how

animals announce when they are ready for the reproductive activity by means of visual, auditory, and olfactory clues. The preciseness and detail of such clues are remarkable. In medicine, criminal investigation and drama, clues are crucial to decide on future action, be it diagnosis and prescription, identification of suspects, or development of the plot. In the social sciences, however, clues have no credibility. On the contrary, the sociology of emergences valorizes clues as pathways toward discussing and arguing for concrete alternative futures. Whereas regarding animals clues carry highly codified information, in society clues are more open and can therefore be fields of argumentation and negotiation about the future. The care of the future exerts itself in such argumentation and negotiation.

As in the case of the sociology of absences, the practices of the WSF also come more or less close to the ideal type of the sociology of emergences. I submit as a working hypothesis that the stronger and more consolidated movements and organizations tend to engage less in the sociology of emergences than the less strong or consolidated. As regards the relations between movements or organizations, the signs and clues given by the less consolidated movements may be devalued as subjective or inconsistent by the more consolidated movements. In this as well, the practice of the sociology of emergences is unequal, and inequalities must be the object of analysis and evaluation.

3. The World Social Forum as Subaltern Cosmopolitan Politics

The newness of the WSF is more unequivocal at the utopian and epistemological level than at the political level. Its political newness does exist, but it exists as a field of tensions and dilemmas, where the new and the old confront each another. The political

newness of the WSF resides in the way in which these confrontations have been handled, avoided, and negotiated.

Before I deal with this topic, let me state more clearly what I mean by the WSF. My previous definition is too general to serve the analytical interests of this section. The WSF is not confined to the three meetings that took place in Porto Alegre (Brazil) between 2001 and 2003. The WSF is the whole set of initiatives of exchange and articulation among the movements and organizations, with a view to advance counter-hegemonic globalization according to the Porto Alegre Charter of Principles. Before anything else, we must include in the WSF all the other thematic forums that have been meeting alongside the WSF: the Forum of Local Authorities (three editions); the World Parliamentary Forum (three editions); the World Education Forum (two editions); the World Forum of Judges (two editions); the World Trade Unions Forum (two editions); the World Choral Forum (two editions); the World Junior Forum (two editions); the Forum of Sexual Diversity; the World Water Forum. Moreover, all the forums that have taken place on their initiative for the past two years — national, regional, and thematic forums — are part of the WSF as well. National or international meetings of movements or organizations to prepare the aforementioned forums or other meetings of international organizations, such as United Nations (UN) summits and parallel meetings resulting thereby, must be also included in the WSF.[4]

Given this scope, the WSF is a very important component of counter-hegemonic globalization. Two crucial dimensions, however, remain outside its scope: the local and national activities and social struggles of the various movements and organizations that fight for a solidary globalization, whether having taken part in the WSF or not; and the rallies against World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings, international financial

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[4] Information regarding the activities carried out under the scope of the WSF can be accessed through the WSF official site at http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/home.asp.

institutions, and the G8. As we shall see, some of the political tensions concerning the WSF have as their reference a narrower definition of the WSF, namely the three Porto Alegre meetings. I refer to these tensions, nonetheless, because, with some adaptation, they do apply to the WSF in the broader sense I here adopt.

Let me begin by stating what to my mind constitutes the WSF's political novelty. I shall then proceed to analyse the problems and tensions that this novelty creates at three levels: representation; organization; political strategy and political action. I should stress that the two first levels — representation and organization — conceive of the WSF in a narrow sense, that is to say, the set of three meetings so far held in Porto Alegre. In section 4 I shall deal with the political agenda, that is to say, with the future as envisaged by the WSF; and in section 5, with the future of the WSF.

3.1 The World Social Forum as political emergence

The political novelties of the WSF can be formulated in the following way:

A very broad conception of power and oppression. Neoliberal globalization did not limit itself to submitting ever more interactions to the market, nor to raising the workers' exploitation rate by transforming the labor force into a global resource, and, at the same time, by preventing the emergence of a global labor market. Neoliberal globalization showed that exploitation is linked with many other forms of oppression that affect women, ethnic minories (sometimes majorities), indigenous peoples, peasants, the unemployed, workers of the informal sector, legal and illegal immigrants, ghetto subclasses, gays and lesbians, children and the young. All these forms of power create exclusion. One cannot ascribe to any one of them, in abstract, nor even to the practices that resist them, any priority as to the claim that "another world is possible." Political priorities are always situated and conjunctural. They depend on the concrete conditions of each country at a

given historical moment. To respond to such conditions and their fluctuations, the movements and organizations must give priority to the articulations amongst them. This ultimately explains the organizational novelty of a WSF with no leaders, its rejection of hierarchies, and its emphasis on networks made possible by the internet.[5]

Equivalence between the principles of equality and of recognition of difference. We live in societies that are obscenely unequal, and yet equality is lacking as an emancipatory ideal. Equality, understood as the equivalence among the same, ends up excluding what is different. All that is homogeneous at the beginning tends eventually to turn into exclusionary violence. Herein lies the grounding of the aforementioned political and organizational novelty. Herein lies as well the grounding of the option for participatory democracy, as ruling principle of social emancipation, to the detriment of closed models such as that of state socialism.

Privileging rebellion and nonconformity to the detriment of revolution. There is no unique theory to guide the movements strategically, because the aim is not so much to seize power but rather to change the many faces of power as they present themselves in the institutions and sociabilities. Furthermore, even those for whom seizing power is a priority are divided as to the strategy. Some prefer drastic breaks to bring about a new order (revolution), while others prefer gradual changes by means of an engagement and dialogue with the enemy (reform). At this level, the novelty consists in the celebration of diversity and pluralism, experimentalism, and radical democracy as well.

3.2 The issue of representation

The Charter of Principles contains a double statement in this regard: first, the WSF does not claim to be representative of counter-hegemonic globalization; second, no one

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[5] On this subject, see Waterman, 2003a, 2003b; Escobar, 2003.

represents the WSF nor can speak in its name. These are two separate, yet related issues: whom does the WSF represent? Who represents the WSF?

The first issue — the WSF's representativity — has been discussed at different levels. One of them concerns the limits of the world dimension of the WSF. The numbers and the diversity of the geographical origin of participants have been increasing steadily, from the first to the third WSF. Here are some statistical data (see table 1).

Table 1 – Attendance of the WSF

	Total attendance	Number of delegates	Number of workshops	Number of countries represented
1st WSF - 2001	20,000	4,700	420	117
2nd WSF - 2002	60,000	12,274	622	123
3rd WSF - 2003	100,000	20,763	1,286	156

Source: IRC, 2002; Whitaker, 2002a; Grzybowski, 2003; Osava, 2003, as well as the WSF website at http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamicasp?pagina=numeros_fsm_por, accessed on June 22th, 2003.

Although unquestionably significant, these data conceal the limits of the WSF's geographical scope. In all its editions, more movements and organizations from Latin America have participated than from other continents.[6] This was particularly noticeable in the last WSF. Of the 100.000 participants, the estimate is that between 60.000 and 70.000 were Brazilian and 15.000 from other Latin American countries. If this is so, then no more than 15.000 participants from the "rest of the world" could have been there.

This fact has led some critics to affirm that the WSF is far from having a world dimension. The absences of Africa and Asia have been criticized. But the truth of the matter is that participation is self-funded, and many of the movements and organizations of these continents have no financial capacity to support their own participation in the WSF. Those that have attended have been often funded by European and American NGOs. In

such cases, the NGOs claim the right to choose who is to be funded. Thus, even if world participation becomes quantitatively broader and more diverse, the issue of representation will always be there until the selection criteria are more transparent and democratic.

The scarce participation from Africa and Asia is negative in itself, but it is even more so if one bears in mind that the absence of movements and organizations from these continents reflects itself, in part, in the absence of themes and debates particularly relevant for or specific of their realities. A vicious circle may thereby emerge: African or Asian movements do not take part in the WSF because the debates that they most cherish are absent, and they are absent precisely because of the scarce participation of Africans and Asians. To obviate this problem, some proposals have been made. For example, movements and organizations of the North, besides paying for their own participation, should contribute towards a common fund to support the participation of movements and organizations of the South that would otherwise be unable to participate (ex. Albert, 2003). The decision to hold the fourth WSF in India was also in part argued for by the need to facilitate the presence of Asian movements and organizations.[7] Africa's problem is that the Atlantic Ocean separates it from Latin America, the Indian Ocean from Asia, and it does not seem to be ready yet to offer to convene the WSF in the near future.

I do not question the relevance of this issue and support every effort to enlarge and balance the geographical representation of the WSF. I believe, however, that the WSF must not be delegitimized for not being worldwide enough. If that were the case, we would be submitting it to a much more demanding criterion of globality than what we apply to organizations and institutions of hegemonic globalization. Moreover, the criterion of

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[6] On the subject of representation at the WSF, see Teivainen, 2003.

[7] Information on the forthcoming (2004) World Social Forum in India can be accessed using the Forum's website, at http://wsfindia.org. Vargas (2003) states that "(…) the process of globalization of the WSF can be clearly observed in the very debated question of moving the WSF 2004 to India, although the 2005 will take place again in Porto Alegre. This alternation will allow the presence or the Forum in different parts of the globe, becoming Porto Alegre the headquarters, symbolic and real, of the WSF, each two years."

geographical representation is only one of the representativity criteria. There are no doubt others, with perhaps far more relevance from the political standpoint. Consider, for example, the representation of different themes and struggle goals, different kinds of organizations and movements, different strategical perspectives, and so on and so forth. I have no doubt that, in other phases of the counter-hegemonic globalization, all these criteria may, or perhaps should be taken into account. Indeed, as I will show below when I deal with issues of political strategy, the question of the presence and affirmation of different strategic alternatives is already in place and drawing heated debate. I do think, however, that in the present phase the representative criteria would raise obstacles to the spontaneous congregation of movements and organizations that has been so decisive to affirm the existence of an alternative kind of globalization.

The WSF had its origin around a small group of organizations that represented only themselves. The enthusiasm the idea generated surprised even its authors. It gave voice to the need many movements and organizations felt for an arena or space that would not be circumscribed to contesting institutions of hegemonic globalization, but would rather function as meeting point for the exchange of experiences, debate of alternatives, and elaboration of plans for joint action. The idea's success was gauged by free circulation, celebration of diversity, participation without conditions, and the absence of negotiations that might compromise the movements. Any restrictive criterion would end up bringing about exclusion at a time when only inclusion would make sense. As a matter of fact, even if one would have wanted to resort to criteria, it would have been impossible to identify them, let alone resort to an organization capable of legitimately selecting and decreeing them, and supervising their enforcement.

It is understandable that the success yielded by the WSF would have contributed to raising the issue of the representativity of participation. In evaluations of the 2nd and 3rd

WSF this issue crops up frequently. I am sure that, if the consolidation of the WSF continues, this issue will have to be adequately faced. Further down I mention some recent proposals in this direction.

Besides geographic representation, two other representation issues are raised: the representation of different strategies and political goals, and the representation of different themes or agendas (the latter partly overlaps the former). I deal with them below.

The issue concerning the representativity of participation ends up unfolding into another one, which concerns the quality of participation. The latter has to do with the different kinds of participation and how participants are placed in each kind. This issue is related to the themes that comprise the organization of the WSF, to which I now turn.

3.3 The organization issue

Just like the previous issue, the organization issue takes the WSF in its narrow sense. Francisco Whitaker (2002b), one of the organizers of the WSF, relates that the idea for the WSF was struck among a bunch of Brazilians who wished to oppose resistence to neoliberalism's single way of thinking, so well expressed in the more than 20 annual meetings of the World Economic Forum in Davos. A resistance, that is, that aimed to go beyond protests and rallies. According to Whitaker,

> (…) *the idea was, with the participation of all the organizations that were already networking in the mass protests, to arrange another kind of meeting on a world scale - the World Social Forum – directed to social concerns. So as to give a symbolic dimension to the start of this new period, the meeting would take place on the same day as the powerful of the world were to meet in Davos.*

Whitaker himself and Oded Grajew presented the idea to Bernard Cassen, editor of *Le Monde Diplomatic* and president of ATTAC.[8] Cassen was excited by the idea and proposed that the Forum take place in Brazil, in the city then already praised worldwide for

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[8] ATTAC was formerly the Association for a Tobin Tax for the Aid of Citizens; latter on it became the Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens.

its municipal participatory democracy known as participatory budgeting – Porto Alegre. Soon a steering committee was put together to organize the WSF from 2001 on (see table 2).

Table 2: Composition of 1st WSF Organizing Committee

ABONG	Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
ATTAC – Brazil	Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens
CBJP	Brazilian Justice and Peace Commission
CIVES	Brazilian Business Association for Citizenship
CUT	Central Trade Union Federation
IBASE	Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Studies
CJG	Centre for Global Justice
MST	Landless Rural Workers Movement

In June 2001, a delegation of the organizations presented the Forum to the movements gathered together in Geneva for a summit parallel to the UN "Copenhagen + 5" Summit. The idea was very well received and an International Council to support the Forum was promptly created. The first WSF was under way. The program was put together according to two dynamics. In the morning there would be four simultaneous panels on each one of the four chosen thematic areas:

- The Production of Wealth and Social Reproduction;

- Access to Wealth and Sustainability;

- Civil Society and the Public Arena;

- Political Power and Ethics in the New Society.

Panelists, invited by the organization, were, in Whitaker's words, "leading names in the fight against the One Truth." In the afternoon there would be workshops coordinated by the participants themselves to engage in debate and exchange experiences. Sessions

were also planned to allow for testimonies from people involved in different kinds of struggles.

This structure was kept in the 2nd WSF. It was somewhat changed in the 3rd,[9] though the basic structure of two kinds of sessions was still there: sessions organized directly by the Organizing Committee (OC), featuring guest speakers invited by the Organizing Committee itself and by the International Committee; and sessions submitted by the participating movements and organizations. During the 2nd WSF the decision was taken to confer more power on the International Committee (IC) for the planning of the Forum, while ascribing mainly an executive role to the OC, predominantly composed of Brazilian organizations.

> *On the nature of the IC, one can read the following in the documents of the WSF: The creation of the IC reflects the concept of the WSF as a permanent, long-term process, designed to build an international movement to bring together alternatives to neoliberal thinking in favor of a new social order (...) Accordingly, the IC will be set up as a permanent body that will give continuity to the WSF beyond 2002, to consolidate the process of taking the WSF to the world level. The Council will play a leading role in defining policy guidelines and the WSF's strategic directions. National Organizing Committees will serve as organizers and facilitators in tandem with the IC.*

The IC consists of the groups and organizations invited to the first meeting and all that were admitted later on by cooptation. The IC acknowledges that it consists of a basic core wherein regional imbalances still exist (sparse participation by Africa, Asia and the Arab World) as well as sectorial ones (young people, blacks, among others). The IC has no fixed number of members. At present, it is comprised of 112 organizations. Among the thematic, issue-oriented organizations, the most represented are the trade unions, followed closely by feminist organizations.

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[9] In the 3rd Forum, there were five rather than four thematic areas: Democratic Sustainable Development; Principles and Values, Human Rights, Diversity and Equality; Media, Culture and Counter-Hegemony; Political Power, Civil Society and Democracy; Democratic World Order, Struggle against Militarism and Promoting Peace. The impact of September 11 and the bellicose vertigo and panic about security it generated can be seen in the change of themes.

This organizational model has raised many issues and provoked tensions. Let me identify some of them.

Internal democracy

Both the OC and the IC were put together by cooptation. Their legitimacy derives from their having organized the WSF with relative success. Their members were not elected and they are not accountable to any jurisdiction. The OC has kept its constitution from the beginning, whereas the IC has become increasingly broader to strengthen its internationalization and to balance its regional and thematic representation.

Although, according to the Charter of Principles, nobody represents the WSF, in practical terms the OC has been assuming that capacity, and that has been a source of tensions. Besides other reasons, the fact remains that the OC is overwhelmingly Brazilian, whereas the WSF aims to be international. The IC was actually created to take care of this problem, the tendency being to strengthen the IC's role in its relations with the OC. This is no easy task. Since the WSF has taken place, up to now, in Porto Alegre, the predominantly Brazilian OC has tended to play a crucial role in organizational and other kinds of decisions. The difficulties piled up during 2002, when the IC wanted to assume the WSF's strategic leadership and give general recommendations for its organization. In the course of the year, the IC held meetings in Porto Alegre, Bangkok, Dakkar, Barcelona and Florence, important decisions having been made each time.[10] It seems that it was not always easy to articulate the IC's and the OC's work. According to some members of the IC, the OC resisted its loss of autonomy. For instance, the decisions made by the coordinators of the thematic areas were not always respected by the OC, especially as far

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The IV WSF (to be held in 2004 in India) has adopted five focal themes also, namely: Imperialist globalization; Patriarchy, Militarism and peace; Communalism (religious sectarianism and fundamentalism); Casteim and racism (oppression, exclusion and discrimination on descent and work).

[10] Summaries of the discussion held during these meetings of the IC can be accessed at the WSF web site.

as the choice of guest speakers was concerned. Without wishing to dismiss this point, I believe that the lack of articulation had a lot to do with conjunctural conditions. The IC became stronger in 2002, at a time when the OC lost some of its operativeness due to internal political reasons in Brazil. 2002 was election year in Brazil. There were state and federal (both legislative and presidential) elections. The Workers' Party (PT),[11] ever a staunch supporter of the WSF in Porto Alegre, both at the organizational and financial levels, lost the elections in Rio Grande do Sul, whose capital is Porto Alegre.[12] This fact not only provoked a financial crisis, to be solved only later on, but also upset the administrative apparatus, which had contributed so much towards the success of the two previous forums.

Be it as it may, there emerged a tense climate of mutual accusations of lack of transparency and accountability. Although none of these committees was elected by the movements and organizations that take part in the WSF, the truth of the matter is that the IC has been assuming the position of the most representative structure of the WSF, as well as a promoter of its internal democracy. Furthermore, the IC has been assuming a decisive role towards strengthening a broad conception of the WSF, turning the WSF into a permanent process and promoting the continuity among its many initiatives, so as to transform the WSF into "an incremental process of collective learning and growth", as stated in the resolutions adopted at IC meetings during the 2003 WSF.[13]

At these meetings, other decisions were made with a view to changing the correlation between the IC and the OC. The first decision was to hold the 2004 WSF in India. The major reason for this decision was, as stated above, the need to deepen the Forum's global

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[11] In Portuguese, "Partido dos Trabalhadores" (PT).

[12] The PT has been in power in the municipality of Porto Alegre since 1989 and in the Rio Grande do Sul state from 1999 till 2002.

[13] The text of the resolutions taken during the Porto Alegre meeting of the IC (21st and 22nd January, 2003) can be obtained from http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.asp?pagina=ci_resolucoes_23jan, accessed on March 21, 2003.

nature, encouraging the participation of movements and organizations from world regions up to now with scarce presence in the WSF. But the fact is that this decision deprived the OC its former centrality. Indeed, the role of the OC with its present composition is no longer clear, as the India WSF is being organized by another OC, put together for that purpose.[14] Curiously enough, however, at the same meeting the decision was made that the 2005 WSF should be held in Porto Alegre once again, perhaps to preempt the risk of holding the WSF outside the city where it became so famous.

Transparency and hierarchies in participation

The issue of internal democracy has other facets. Two of them seem particularly pertinent to me. The first one concerns the lack of transparency of some of the decisions which, seemingly organizational, actually have or could have political meaning. The criticism has been swelling that such decisions are taken by a very restrictive group, without the least control by the movements and organizations affected. Such decisions may include the rejection or maginalization of proposals submitted by the movements and organizations, without explicit justification. The US Left, for example, considered itself marginalized by the organization of the 2002 WSF, a perception that was deepened in 2003. Michael Albert, who organized a wide group of sessions under the general title of "Life After Capitalism",[15] considered himself discriminated against by the OC. The sessions did not appear on the program, room assignment was chaotic (successive room changes, lack of simultaneous translation, etc.), and participation became very difficult as a consequence. Again without wishing to question the facts, I believe that, in this concrete case, the alleged discrimination was rather the result of the near organizational collapse of

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[14] Actually, and in order to prepare the 2004 WSF, several committees were created: the Indian General Council (IGC), the Indian Working Committee (IWK), and the Indian Organizing Committee (IOC). On this matter, see also Sen, 2003.
[15] The papers presented at this workshop can be accessed at www.zmag.org/lac.htm.

the 2003 WSF. For reasons already stated and others I shall mention below, the organization of the 2003 WSF was far from reaching the quality that distinguished the organization of the two previous Forums.

The second dimension of the democracy and transparency issue concerns the hierarchical structure of the various events at the WSF meetings and relates to the choice of guest speakers. This has to do with the already mentioned quality of participation.

The distinction between sessions organized directly by the OC and those proposed by the movements and organizations has created some tension. On the one hand, whereas those who participate in the first kind of sessions are invited by the WSF and have their participation funded, those who participate in the second kind of sessions must count only upon funding generated by the movements and organizations themselves. On the other hand, the sessions promoted directly by the organization are considered to be the most important ones and are granted time and space conditions that the others do not have. For instance, it was evident during the 2003 WSF that the most serious organizational problems affected more the sessions promoted by the movements and organizations than the sessions promoted by the OC-IC.

The idea that all different kinds of sessions should be treated the same way has been gaining strength. As much transpires from the above mentioned IC resolution of January 2003:

When holding the forums, to organize discussions and the search for alternatives giving equal weight to the activities scheduled by the organizers and to the seminars and workshops proposed and organized by the participants themselves, as well as to stimulate the international character of these forums.

Another resolution goes in the same direction: To deepen the process of experimentation of horizontal organizational practices and systems based on co-responsibility.

Criticism concerning lack of democracy and transparency is also frequent regarding the choice of invited guests. The criticism respects both the choice process, and the specific invitations themselves (or exclusions from lists of potential invitees), namely when well-known personalities are at stake, be they Fidel Castro, Hugo Chavez, Ben Bella, Mário Soares. Criticism also concerns the toleration of the presence of controversial figures, such as leaders of guerilla groups.

Feminist movements have been particularly critical of the choice process, because women have been scarcely represented on the panels of plenary sessions, even though they constitute such a large proportion of all the participants (in the 2002 WSF, women were 43 percent of the delegates and apparently 52 percent of the participants).[16] Faithful to their two mottoes – "another world is possible" and "no one single way of thinking" – feminist movements have been claiming larger presence of women among guest speakers, as well as on the organizational structures, both the IC and the OC. Bearing in mind the experience of the two first forums, says Virginia Vargas of the Flora Tristan Feminist Center (Peru) and the Marcosur Feminist Articulation (2002: 56): "despite women's more visible impact, women have not been proportionally represented in the Conferences organized by the Forum or on the Organizing Committee. This is still a single way of thinking, huddled away amidst strategies for change."

Other critics mention the top-down nature of the conferences and the co-existence in the WSF of a top-down WSF, comprised of the initiatives of the IC and the OC, and a bottom-up WSF, comprised of the large majority of the participants. Commenting on the experience at the 2nd WSF, Hebe de Bonafini, of the Argentinean "Mothers of Plaza de Mayo," criticizes the inequality of representation, of which she distinguishes three levels:

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[16] Grzybowski, 2002; on the 3rd WSF, see the *Declaration of the 2003 World Social Forum: Perspective of Women of the World March of Women*, at http://www.ffq.qc.ca/marche2000/en/fsm2003.html, accessed on March 19, 2003, and Lagunas, 2003.

the organizers, the official participants and the "rank-and-file." Says Hebe de Bonafini (2002):

There were three different levels to this WSF. First, there were the small gatherings of those who were in charge, controlling things (...). Then there were all the commissions and seminars where all the intellectuals, philosophers and thinkers participated. And then there were the rank-and-file folks."

Viewing herself as part of the last group, she concludes: "We [Mothers of Plaza de Mayo] had participated at that level and discussed with all sorts of people. But the fact is that we were brought to the WSF so we could listen – not so the rank-and-file could participate." Other participants are likewise critical of the forum's top-down organization. Commenting on the 3rd WSF, Michael Albert (2003), for instance, distinguishes it from all the others (regional and thematic forums) that have been occurring in different parts of the world, often inspired by the WSF. According to him, whereas the WSF is top-down, the others are bottom-up. "Without exaggerating the virtues of the forums worldwide," adds Albert, "they are having positive effects and moving in participatory, transparent, and democratic directions. The WSF, however, is different." Michael Albert offers several proposals aimed to deepen the WSF's participatory and democratic nature (more on this below).

Curiously enough, the organizers themselves acknowledge many of these criticisms, which make me think that these organizational tensions are part of the Forum's growing and learning process itself. Some of the criticisms denounce accusations of less limpid intentions on the part of the OC, and some come even close to conspiracy theories. I have been following the activity of the OC and, as far as I can tell, such criticisms have no grounding. The results of the decisions, some of which are rightly criticizable, have mainly to do with the OC's incapacity to handle an event that became umanageable because of its dimension and complexity. By way of example, let me quote three proposals made by

myself with a view to increase internal democracy and transparency: posting the decisions taken by the OC or IC in designated places; saving some space in the evening for an open debate about organization or other issues; taking advantage of the technologies of electronic democracy to carry out referendum on organizational or strategic decisions.[17] The two first proposals would have been easy to put in place, had not been an administrative breakdown. Suffice it to say that during the 3rd WSF the full program including all activities was never published.

The WSF's organizational structure was the most adequate to launch the Forum and render it credible internationally. For instance, the idea of ascribing to the OC the promotion of some of the sessions and the choice of guests was adopted with a double goal in mind: first, minimally to structure the themes to be debated in order to go from the denouncing discourse of mass protests to the discourse of proposals and alternatives; second, to give international visibility to the Forum by addressing invitations to well-known individuals. Let us not forget that the WSF saw itself as an alternative to the WEF and was ready to dispute with it the attention of the global media.[18] To my mind, without this kind of organization and without the extraordinary devotion of the people that were charged with it, the WSF would never had accomplished what it has so far. The consolidation of the WSF will lead it to another phase of development, in which case its organizational structure will have to be reconsidered so as to adjust it to its new demands and the tasks ahead.

Parties and movements

The relation among political parties, social movements, and NGOs in the construction of counter-hegemonic globalization is no doubt controversial. In a broad

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[17] On the debates regarding the possibilities of ciber-democracy (i.e., of other forms of participation and mobilization), see Waterman, 2003a, 2003b; Johansson, 2003; Bennett (in press).

sense, it also affects the WSF. The Charter of Principles is clear on the subordinate role of parties in the WSF.[19] The WSF is an emanation of the civil society as organized in social movements and nongovernmental organizations. In practice, however, things are ambiguous. The articulation between parties and social movements varies from country to country and depends on specific historical and political conditions.

Here, I am not concerned with this general topic. I just want to highlight a specific issue: the role of the PT in the organization of the three editions of the WSF. The PT, in its capacity of government party in the State of Rio Grande do Sul and in the city of Porto Alegre, gave decisive support to the organization of the WSFs, both at the financial and logistical and administrative level. Without such support it would have been impossible, at least in Brazil, to organize the WSF with the ambition that characterized it from the start. To be sure, this kind of support had its price. Particularly during the 2nd Forum, PT's attempt to use the WSF to spread its message and engage in political propaganda was quite visible. Many participants were ready to criticize the organization on this account. Some of them went so far as to criticize the PT for instrumentalizing the WSF. These criticisms originated mainly among autonomist, anarchist groups or extreme left groups.

To my mind, the issue of the relation between parties and movements cannot be decided in the abstract. As I said, the historical and political conditions vary from country to country, and may dictate distinct responses in different contexts. In the Brazilian context, the PT itself is an emanation of the social movements, and its history cannot be separated from their history. Since the mid-1980s, the struggles against the dictatorship received their best support from the unions and social movements, and the PT was founded

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[18] The 1st WSF was attended by some 1.800 journalists, and the 3rd WSF by more than 4.000 journalists.
[19] The Charter of Principles was agreed upon by the International Council of the WSF in 2001. Latter on, along the preparation of the 2004 WSF, it was discussed in various meetings in India and then adapted to address certain specific conditions that prevail in India today. The charter of the WSF India includes specific clauses that assert the inclusive character of the Forum, to address the question of 'communalism' and to emphasize the importance of diversity and of local idioms, and to allow the possibility of political parts to

in the midst of this powerful social mobilization. Since its foundation, the PT has continued to have a privileged relation with the social movements. The support that the PT grants the WSF must be understood in this very context. The PT's attempt to use the 2002 WSF in its electoral campaign is definitely to be condemned. Contrary to what some other critics argue, I do believe, however, that the PT did not interfere substantially with the choices of the organization, whether it be thematics or invited guests. The WSF became much bigger, and the PT was in any case too small to have a significant impact in this regard.

The relation between political parties (especially parties on the left) and the WSF will no doubt continue to be debated in the different countries in which forums will be held. In the majority of the cases, the issue is not so much whether such a relation should or should not exist, but rather to define the exact terms of such a relation. If the relation is transparent, horizontal, and mutually respectful, it may well be, in some contexts, an important lever for the consolidation of the WSF. The European Social Forum, held in Florence in 2002, clearly illustrates this. The strength of Italian social movements made possible horizontal articulations between them and the parties on the left, particularly the Rifundazione Comunista and the PDS (left democrats). Such articulations contributed decisively towards the Forum's success.[20]

Size and continuity

The 3rd WSF had about 100.000 participants. Allowing for the conjunctural reasons that, as I mentioned, may have affected the OC's efficiency and organizational capacity, it is not easy to imagine a well organized Forum with so many participants. Somehow, the WSF was victim of its own success: its size rendered it unmanegeable. It is to be believed

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participate in the WSF (Sen, 2003). See in Annex a comparison between the two versions of the Charter of Principles.

that this organizational form has reached its limits. The next WSF will take place in India, and the number of its participants is hard to predict. When the WSF returns to Porto Alegre in 2005, a new organizational formula will be presumably in place.

Granting that the WSF is a learning process, more and more voices have been supporting the idea that the WSF should increasingly turn into a permanent phenomenon, comprised of many meetings articulated amongst themselves. Thus it will be possible to further the internationalization of the WSF, structure and focus the dialogues and debates much better, and strengthen the formulation of alternatives. The number of participants in these other forums will certainly be lower and manageable. This was also the purport of the IC in its meeting of January 2003: To stimulate the multiplication of regional, national and even local events, as well as theme events, that intercommunicate horizontally and that will not be articulated as preparatory for one another but as meetings with their own political value.[21]

The intention is, thus, to further highlight partial meetings to the detriment of the "global event" that WSF has been. Such a change compels new coordination tasks. Quite aware of this, the IC decided at the same meeting to take on the task of producing a continued and systematic analysis of the situation in the world and, on the basis of it, to assess

> *the continuity of the process, to ensure the respect for its Charter of Principles when holding regional and theme forums, to identify themes for the IC's work, for the world events and for the theme forums to be stimulated, as well as to identify regions of the world in which the process needs to expand, acting in alliance with movements and organizations from these regions.*

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[20] On this subject, see, for example, Bertinoti, 2002.

[21] As a result of this policy of 'decentralization' aimed at improving the quality and capacity of analysis about counter-hegemonic struggles, several regional (European Social Forum, African Social Forum, Asian Social Forum, Social Forum of the Americas, just to name a few), thematic (more recently, the World Thematic Social forum on democracy, human rights, wars and narcotraffic was held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, June 16-20, 2003) and country (among others, the Portuguese, the Austrian, Venezuelan, Colombian, Moroccan, etc.) forums took place already.

The issue of strategy and political action

While utopia, the WSF is characterized, as I have already said, by its claim to the existence of an alternative to the anti-utopian, single way of thinking of neoliberalism's conservative utopia. It is a radically democratic utopia that celebrates diversity, plurality, and horizontality. It celebrates another possible world, itself plural in its possibilities. The newness of this utopia in left thinking in western capitalist modernity — which has in Zapatista thinking an eloquent formulation — cannot but be problematical as it translates itself into strategic planning and political action. These are marked by the historical trajectory of the political left throughout the twentieth century. The translation of utopia into politics is not, in this case, merely the translation of long range into medium and short range. It is also the translation of the new into the old. The tensions and divisions brought about by this are no less real for that reason. What happens is that the reality of the divergencies is often a ghostly reality, in which divergences about concrete political options get mixed up with divergences about codes and languages of political option. Moreover, it is not always possible to determine if the reality of the divergences lies in real divergences.

It should be stressed, however, that the novelty of the utopia managed to overcome the political divergences. Contrary to what happened in the thinking and practice of the left in western capitalist modernity, the WSF managed to create a style and an atmosphere of inclusion of and respect for divergences that made it very difficult for the different political factions to self-exclude themselves at the start under the excuse that they were being excluded. For this contributed decisively the WSF's "minimalist" program stated in its Charter of Principles: emphatic assertion of respect for diversity; access hardly conditioned (movements or groups that advocate political violence are excluded); no voting or

deliberations at the Forum as such; no representative entity to speak for the Forum. It is almost like a *tabula rasa* where all forms of struggle against neoliberalism and for a juster society may have their place. Before such openness, those who choose to exclude themselves find it difficult to define what exactly they are excluding themselves from.

All this has contributed to making the WSF's power of attraction greater than its capacity to repel. Even the movements that are most severely critical of the WSF, such as the anarchists, have not been absent. There is definitely something new in the air, something that is chaotic, messy, ambiguous, and indefinite enough to deserve the benefit of the doubt or be susceptible to manipulation. Few would want to miss this train, particularly at a time in history when trains had ceased to ride. For all these reasons, the desire to highlight what the movements and organizations have in common has prevailed upon the desire to underscore what separates them. The manifestation of tensions or cleavages has been relatively tenuous and, above all, has not resulted in mutual exclusions. It remains to be seen for how long this will to convergence and this chaotic sharing of differences will last.

Neither the kinds of cleavages nor the way the movements relate to them are randomly distributed inside the WSF. On the contrary, they reflect a meta-cleavage between western and nonwestern political cultures. Up to a point, this meta-cleavage also exists between the North and the South. Thus, given the strong presence of movements and organizations of the North Atlantic and white Latin America, it is no wonder that the most salient cleavages reflect the political culture and historical trajectory of the left in this part of the world. This means, on the one hand, that many movements and organizations from Africa, Asia, the indigenous and black Americas, and the Europe of immigrants do not recognize themselves in these cleavages; on the other, that alternative cleavages that these movements and organizations might want to make explicit are perhaps being concealed or

minimized by the prevailing ones.[22] After this caveat, my next step is to identify the main manifest cleavages.

Reform or revolution. This cleavage carries the weight of the tradition of the western left. It is the cleavage between those who think that another world is possible, by the gradual transformation of the unjust world in which we live, through legal reform and mechanisms of representative democracy; and those who think that the world we live in is basically a capitalist world, that this world will never tolerate reforms that will put it in question, and that it must therefore be overthrown and replaced by a socialist world. This is also regarded as a cleavage between moderates and radicals. Either field comprises a wide variety of positions. For instance, among revolutionaries, there is a clear cleavage between the old left, that aspires to a kind of state socialism, the anarchists, that are radically anti-Statist, and some newer left rather ambivalent about the role of the State in a socialist society. Although they amount to a very minor proportion of the WSF, the anarchists are among the fiercest critics of reformism, which they claim controls the WSF's leadership.

This cleavage reverberates, albeit not linearly, in strategic options and options for political action. Among the most salient ones should be counted the strategic option between reforming the institutions of neoliberal globalization (WTO and International Financial Institutions) or fighting for eliminating and replacing them; and the option for political action between, on the one hand, constructive dialogue and engagement with those institutions, and, on the other, confrontation with them.

This cleavage translates itself into opposite positions, either as regards the diagnosis of contemporary societies, or as regards the evaluation of the WSF itself. As to the diagnosis, contemporary societies are at times viewed as societies where there are multiple discriminations and injustices, not all of them attributable to capitalism. Capitalism, in

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[22] This is well illustrated by the changes introduced by the Indian Working Committee in the Charter of Principles to adapt it to the social, political and cultural realities and cleavages prevailing in South Asia. See

turn, is not homogeneous, and the struggle must focus on its most exclusionary form — neoliberalism. Other times, contemporary societies are viewed as intrinsically unjust and discriminatory because they are capitalist. Capitalism is an enveloping system in which class discrimination feeds on sexual, racial and other kinds of discrimination. Hence, the struggle must focus on capitalism as whole and not against any single one of its manifestations.

As to the evaluation of the WSF, the WSF is viewed now as the embryo of an efficatious contestation to neoliberal globalization, for confronting neoliberal globalization at the global scale where more social injustice has been produced, now as a movement which, because it is not grounded on the principle of the class struggle, will accomplish little beyond a few rhetorical changes in dominant capitalist discourse.

What is new about the WSF as a political entity is that the majority of the movements and organizations that participate in it do not recognize themselves in these cleavages and refuse to take part in them. There is great resistance to assuming rigidly a given position and even greater to labeling it. The majority of movements and organizations have political experiences in which moments of confrontation alternate or combine with moments of dialogue and engagement, in which long range visions of social change cohabit with the tactical possibilities of the political and social conjuncture in which the struggles take place, in which radical denunciations of capitalism do not paralyze the energy for small changes when the big changes are not possible. Above all, for many movements and organizations, this cleavage is westcentric or northcentric, and is more useful to understand the past of the left than its future. Indeed, many movements and organizations do not recognize themselves, for the same reasons, in the dichotomy left and right.

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in annex a comparison between the two versions.

Precisely because for many movements and organizations the priority is not to seize power but rather change the power relations in oppression's many faces, the political tasks, however radical, must be carried out here and now, in the society in which we live. It makes no sense, therefore, to ask a priori if their success is incompatible with capitalism. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is useful to understand the movements' political actions. What is necessary is to create alternative, counter-hegemonic visions, capable of sustaining the daily practices and sociabilities of citizens and social groups. The work of the movements' leaderships is of course important, but in no way is it conceived of as the work of an enlightened avanguard that breaks the path for the masses, ever the victims of mystification and false consciousness. On the contrary, as Subcomandante Marcos recommends, it behooves the leaderships to "walk with those who go slowlier." It is not a question of either revolution or reform. It is, for some, a question of rebellion and contruction, for others, a question of revolution in a nonLeninist sense, a question of civilizational change occurring over a long period of time.

Socialism or social emancipation. This cleavage is related to the previous one but there is no perfect overlap between the two. Regardless of the position taken vis-à-vis the previous cleavage, or the refusal to take position, the movements and organizations diverge as to the political definition of the other possible world. For some, socialism is still an adequate designation, however abundant and disparate the conceptions of socialism may be. For the majority, however, socialism carries in itself the idea of a closed model of a future society, and must, therefore, be rejected. They prefer other, less politically charged designations, suggesting openness and constant search for alternatives. For example, social emancipation as the aspiration to a society in which the different power relations are replaced by relations of shared authority. This is an inclusive designation focusing more on processes than on final stages of social change.

But many movements of the South think that no general labels need be attached to the goals of the struggles. Labels run the risk of taking off from the practices that originated them, acquiring a life of their own, and giving rise to perverse results. As a matter of fact, according to some, the concept of socialism is westcentric and northcentric, while the concept of emancipation is equally prey of the western bias to create false universalisms. Hence many do not recognize themselves in either term of this dichotomy, and don't even bother to propose any alternative one.

The State as enemy or potential ally. This is also a cleavage in which movements of the North recognize themselves more easily than movements of the South. On the one hand, there are those who think that the State, although in the past it may well have been an important arena of struggle, for the past 25 years has been transnationalized and turned into an agent of neoliberal globalization. Either the State has become irrelevant or is today what it has always been — the expression of capitalism's general interests. The privileged target of counter-hegemonic struggles must, therefore, be the State, or at least they must be fought with total autonomy vis-à-vis the State. On the other hand, there are those who think that the State is a social relation and, as such, it is contradictory and continues to be an important arena of struggle. Neoliberal globalization did not rob the State of its centrality, it rather reoriented it better to serve the interests of global capital. Deregulation is a social regulation like any other, hence a political field where one must act if there are conditions for acting.

The majority of the movements, even those that acknowledge the existence of a cleavage in this regard, refuse to take a rigid and principled position. Their experiences of struggle show that the State, while sometimes the enemy, can often be a precious ally in the struggle against transnational impositions. In these circumstances, the most adequate attitude is, again, pragmatism. If in some situations confrontation is in order, in others

collaboration is rather advised. In others still a combination of both is appropriate. The important thing is that, at every moment or in every struggle, the movement or organization in question be clear and transparent regarding the reasons for the adopted option, so as to safeguard the autonomy of the action. Autonomy is, in such cases, always problematical, and so it must be watched carefully. According to the radical autonomists, collaboration with the State will always end up compromising the organizations' autonomy. They fear that collaborationists, whether the State or the institutions of neoliberal globalization be involved, end up being co-opted. An alliance between the reformist wing of counter-hegemonic globalization and the reformist wing of hegemonic globalization will ensue thereby, ending up compromising the goals of the WSF.

National or global struggles. This is the most evenly distributed cleavage in the totality of movements and organizations that comprise the WSF. On one side, there are the movements that, while participating in the WSF, believe that the latter is no more than a meeting point and a cultural event, since the real struggles that are truly important for the welfare of the populations are fought at the national level against the State or the dominant national civil society. For instance, in a report on the WSF prepared by the Movement for National Democracy in the Philippines, one can read:

> (…) *the World Social Forum still floats somewhere above, seeing and trying yet really unable to address actual conditions of poverty and powerlessness brought about by Imperialist globalization in many countries. Unless it finds definite ways of translating or even transcending its "globalness" into more practical interventions that address these conditions, it just might remain a huge but empty forum that is more a cultural affair than anything else... national struggles against globalization are and should provide the anchor to any anti-globalization initiative at the international level.* (Gobrin-Morante, 2002: 19)

In other words, globalization is most effectively fought against at the national level.

On the other side, there are the movements according to which the State is now transnationalized and thus is no longer the privileged center of political decision. This decentering of the State brought about as well the decentering of the civil society, which is

subjected today to many processes of cultural and social globalization. Furthermore, in some situations, the object of the struggle (be it a decision of the WTO, the World Bank, or the oil drilling by a TNC) is outside the national space and includes a plurality of countries simultaneously. This is why the scale of the struggle must be increasingly global, a fact on which the WSF draws its relevance.

According to the large majority of the movements, this is again a cleavage that does not do justice to the concrete needs of concrete struggles. What is new about contemporary societies is that the scales of sociability are increasing more interconnected. I mean the local, national, and global scales. In the most remote village of the Amazon or India the effects of hegemonic globalization and the ways in which the national State engages with it are clearly felt. If this is the case with scales of sociability, it is the same with the scales of counter-hegemonic struggles. It is obvious that each political practice or social struggle is organized in accordance with a privileged scale, be it local, national, or global, but whatever the scale may be, all the others must be involved as condition of success. The decision on which scale to privilege is a political decision that must be taken in accordance with concrete political conditions. It is therefore not possible to opt in the abstract for any one hierarchy among scales of counter-hegemonic practice or struggle.

Direct or institutional action. This cleavage is clearly linked to cleavages 1 and 3. It specifically concerns the modes of struggle that should be adopted preferably or even exclusively. It is a cleavage with a long tradition in the western left. Those for whom this cleavage continues to have a great deal of importance are the same that slight the newness of neoliberal globalization in the historical process of capitalist domination.

On the one side, there are the movements that believe that legal struggles, based on dialogue and engagement with State institutions or international agencies, are ineffectual because the political and legal system of the State and the institutions of capitalism are

impervious to any legal or institutional measures capable of really improving the living conditions of the popular classes. Institutional struggles call for the intermediation of parties, and parties tend to put those struggles at the service of their party interests and constituencies. The success of an institutional struggle has, therefore, a very high price, the price of cooptation, decharacterization, and banalization. But even in the rare case in which an institutional struggle leads to legal and institutional measures that correspond to the movements' objectives, it is almost certain that the concrete application of such measures will end up being subjected to the legal-bureaucratic logic of the State, thereby frustrating the movements' expectations. In the end there will be only a hollow hope. This is why only direct action, mass protest, strikes will yield the success of the struggles. The popular classes have no weapon but external pressure on the system. If they venture into it, they are defeated from the start.

On the contrary, the supporters of institutional struggles assume that the "system" is contradictory, a political and social relation where it is possible to fight and where failure is not the only possible outcome. In modernity the State was the center of this system. In the course of the twentieth century the popular classes conquered important institutional spaces, of which the welfare system is a good manifestation. The fact that the welfare system is now in crisis and the "opening" that it offered the popular classes is now being closed up, does not mean that the process is irreversible. Indeed, it won't be so if the movements and organizations continue to struggle inside the institutions and the legal system.

This cleavage is not spread out at random among the movements that comprise the WSF. In general the stronger movements and organizations are those that more frequently privilege institutional struggles, whereas the less strong are those that more frequently privilege direct action. This cleavage is much more lively among movements and

organizations of the North than of the South. The large majority of the movements, however, refuse to take sides in this cleavage. According to them, the concrete legal and political conditions must dictate the kind of struggle to be privileged. Conditions may actually recommend the sequential or simultaneous use of the two kinds of struggle. Historically, direct action was at the genesis of progressive juridico-institutional changes, and it was always necessary to combat the cooptation or even subversion of such changes through direct action.

The principle of equality or the principle of respect for difference. As I have already said, one of the novelties of the WSF is the fact that the large majority of its movements and organizations believe that, although we live in revoltingly unequal societies, equality is not enough as a guiding principle of social emancipation. Social emancipation must be grounded on two principles — the principle of equality and the principle of respect for difference. The struggle for either of them must be articulated with the other, for the fulfillment of either is condition of the fulfillment of the other. Nonetheless, there is a cleavage among the movements and even, sometimes, inside the same movement on whether priority should be given to one of these principles, and in that case to which one. Among those that say yes to first question, the cleavage is between those that give priority to the principle of equality — for equality alone may create real opportunities for the recognition of difference — and those that give priority to the principle of the recognition of difference, for without such recognition equality conceals the exclusions and marginalities on which it lies, thus becoming doubly oppressive (for what it conceals and for what it shows).

This cleavage occurs among movements and intra-movements. It traverses, among others, the workers', the feminist, the indigenous, and the black movements. For instance, whereas the workers' movement has privileged the principle of equality to the detriment of

the principle of the recognition of difference, the feminist movement has privileged the latter in detriment to the former. But the most shared position is indeed that both principles have priority together, and that it is not correct to prioritize either one in the abstract. Concrete political conditions will dictate to each movement which one of the principles is to be privileged in a given concrete struggle. Any struggle conceived under the aegis of one of these two principles must be organized so as to open space for the other principle.

In the feminist movement of the WSF, this position is now dominant. Virgínia Vargas (s/d) expresses it well when she says:

At the World Social Forum, feminists have begun (...) nourishing processes that integrate gender justice with economic justice, while recovering cultural subversion and subjectivity as a longer term strategy for transformation. This confronts two broad expressions of injustice: socio-economic injustice, rooted in societal political and economic structures, and cultural and symbolic injustice, rooted in societal patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. Both injustices affect women, along with many other racial, ethnic, sexual and geographical dimensions.

Agreeing with Sonia Alvarez, she asks for new feminisms – feminisms of these times – as a discursive, expansive, heterogeneous panorama, generating polycentric fields of action that spread over a range of civil society organizations and are not constrained to women's affairs, although women undoubtedly maintain them in many ways. And she concludes: "Our presence in the WSF, asking these very questions, is also an expression of this change."

Many of the tensions and cleavages mentioned above are not specific of the WSF. They in fact belong to the historical legacy of the social forces that for the past 200 years have struggled against the *status quo* for a better society. The specificity of the WSF resides in the fact that all these cleavages coexist in its bosom without upsetting its aggregating power. To my mind, two factors contribute to this. First, the different cleavages are important in different ways for the different movements and organizations,

and none of them is present in the practices or discourses of all the movements and organizations. Thus, all of them, at the same time that they tend towards factionalism, liberate potential for consensus. That is to say, all the movements and organizations have room for action and discourse in which to agree with all the other movements or organizations, whatever the cleavages among them. Second, there has so far been no tactical or strategic demand that would intensify the cleavages by radicalizing positions. On the contrary, cleavages have been fairly low intensity. For the movements and organizations in general, what unites has been more important than what divides. In reckoning of union and separation, the advantages of union have overcome the advantages of separation. Third, even when cleavages are acknowledged, the different movements and organizations distribute themselves amongst them in a nonlinear way. If a given movement opposes another in a given cleavage, it may well be on the same side in another cleavage. Thus, the different strategic alliances or common actions featured by each movement tend to have different partners. In this way are precluded the accumulation and strengthening of divergences that could result from the alignment of the movements in multiple cleavages. On the contrary, the cleavages end up neutralizing or disempowering one another. Herein lies the WSF's aggregating power.

4. The World Social Forum and the Future: From Realistic Utopias to Alternatives

As I have already suggested, the critical and democratic utopia symbolized by the WSF manifests itself at the outset as an imbalance between negative expectations (what is rejected) and positive expectations (what is proposed as alternative). The success of the

first WSF and the increasing counter-hegemonic globalization up until September 11 convinced the movements and NGOs in charge of the organization of the WSF that the movement of movements might be entering a new phase, a politically more consistent one, which would require a higher level of concretization of alternatives. Once the idea of an alternative globalization to hegemonic globalization was consolidated, the political strength of the movement of movements would depend on its capacity to formulate credible proposals for the political agendas of nations and multilateral organizations alike. On the other hand, the consolidation of the WSF rendered more striking the cleavages about strategies and political action that I analyzed in the previous section. Now, the cleavages reverberating on the kinds of proposals submitted were in turn an incentive to further discussion on alternatives and proposals.

By the middle of 2001 the WSF's organizing committee was spreading among movements and organizations, the coordinators of the five major themes (mentioned earlier in the text), as well its guest speakers, the recommendation that interventions and debates were to focus on formulating concrete proposals. The *mot d'ordre* was: "we must advance more proposals." Besides formulating more proposals, some participants also engaged in the formulation of general objectives or principles that identified the need for alternatives and justified them ethically. This urge for presenting objective proposals is clearly noticeable through the 2002 WSF. Here, for example, Vandana Shiva, following earlier positions, presents the potential for the global justice movement itself—specifically in the form of what she terms, "the living democracy movement"—as an alternative to globalization in and of itself. She argues,

> *Living democracy is about life, at the vital everyday level, and decisions and freedoms related to everyday living - the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the water we drink. It is not just about elections and casting votes once every 3 or 4 or 5 years. It is a permanently vibrant democracy."* (Shiva, 2002).

In sum, by keeping the commitment to democracy alive, we will both create and sustain an alternative world.

Theses were also formulated that had a higher level of concretization, but which lacked the format as well as the substantive and procedural concreteness that might push them on to a political agenda. I myself presented 15 theses for deepening democracy, and François Houtart presented a series of strategic recommendations toward the coherence among the different proposals, as a way to prevent the WSF from becoming a supermarket of alternatives. According to him, "There is need for both coherence in the proposals and an ample vision of the alternatives" (Houtart, 2001). As a guide, he proposes thinking of alternatives on three levels: 1) in terms of "reconstructing the utopias," not in the sense of impossible things but rather in the sense of mobilizing objectives; 2) defining medium-term alternatives, that is, the objectives which will take time, because we are dealing with a long process of the results of arduous social struggles, with the purpose of resisting the capitalist system itself; 3) defining short-term alternatives: those which are feasible within a foreseen future and which can be mobilizing even though the objectives are partial.

In addition, Houtart emphasizes the importance of strategizing in the struggle against the globalization of capital and considers the conceptualization of strategy as key to any conceptualization of alternatives. He lists the main elements of strategy as follows: 1) de-legitimization of the "logic" of the capitalist system; 2) building convergence among efforts and networks to work against the system; 3) formulation of alternatives at the three levels mentioned above: utopias, medium-term and short-term; 4) finding formulas for political expression; 5) not to be marginalized as a movement, i.e., not to be rendered "folkloric", "violent" or "rare." He also stresses three criteria as important for selecting themes and actions in which the movement should concentrate their efforts: 1) the need to keep in mind the popular contemporary sensitivity of certain themes, 2) the importance of

linking up "events of the moment"; 3) the need to address themes on which considerable preparation has already been done by specific groups and which can lead to concrete alternatives.

Hundreds of proposals in this more restricted sense were nonetheless submitted. The great majority of these proposals were presented and discussed in the workshops put together at the initiative of the movements and organizations present. By way of example, I mention some the proposals focusing on economic and institutional changes:

1. *Proposal by the Focus on the Global South*[23] *for a "Pluralistic System of Global Economic Governance."* This proposal states the aim

> (…) *not to reform the TNC-driven WTO and Bretton Woods institutions, but, through a combination of passive and active measures, either a) to decommission them; b) neuter them (e.g. converting the IMF into a pure research institution monitoring exchange rates of capital flows); or c) radically reduce their powers and turn them into just another set of actors coexisting with and being checked by other international organizations, agreements, and regional groupings.*

This strategy would include strengthening institutions like UNCTAD,[24] the ILO[25] and economic blocks (Mercosur,[26] SADC,[27] ASEAN,[28] etc.); and the formation of new international and regional institutions dedicated to "devolving the greater part of production, trade, and economic decision-making to the national and local level" with multiple checks and balances, and "based on their values, their rhythms, and the strategies of their choice."

2. *Proposal by the ATTAC (2002) for the Control of Financial Capital.* It includes aims to restore and promote controls over capital flows to nation-states, through national-

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[23] *Focus on the Global South* is a NGO aimed at articulating, linking and developing coherence between local community-based and national, regional and global paradigms of change, with a strong emphasis on south-south articulation. This proposal was submitted by Walden Bello, Executive Director of Focus.
[24] UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
[25] ILO – Internacional Labor Organization.
[26] Mercosur - *Mercado Común del Sur* (Southern Community Market) is a project aiming at promoting the economic and political integration of Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina.
[27] SADC - Southern Africa Development Community.
[28] ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

level policy measures and international fiscal measures; levy tax on international financial transactions (Tobin Tax), which would have a low average rate and its annualized cost inversely proportional to the duration of the transactions to discourage speculation; levy a variable tax on FDI (foreign direct investment); levy tax on the profits of transnational corporations; reinforce specific controls on all financial markets; elimination of tax havens, by the lifting of banking confidentiality, intervening in states that harbor tax havens, publishing data on tax havens, respecting anti-money laundering laws, etc; reinforcement of controls on banks; prudential rules for international investors; make private actors who are responsible for the crises pay; and reform the international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank).

3. *Proposal by the CorpWatch and Global Exchange[29] for the Conference on Transnational Corporations*. It states that: "The current corporate-globalization paradigm, which prioritizes corporate profit maximization over human rights, labor rights and environmental rights, should be turned on its head to prioritize these universal life values."

It then proceeds with detailed proposals to realize this objective, including the separation of corporations and the state which "should also extend from local and national governance, to global governance institutions such as the WTO, World Bank, IMF, UN, etc."; campaigns against specific corporations and their activities; campaigns to seek to ally with alternative, smaller scale, local, more accountable businesses that are providing similar goods or services; campaigns for, and indices to, measure corporate responsibility; binding rules on transnational corporate behavior to be established through a Framework Convention on Corporate Accountability; and strengthening collaboration between social

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[29] *CorpWatch* is a US-based organization working to hold corporations accountable on issues of human rights, labor rights and environmental justice; *Global Exchange* is a multicultural human rights organization dedicated to promoting environmental, political, and social justice around the world. This proposal was submitted to the WSF 2002 by Joshua Karliner (CorpWatch) and Karolo Aparicio (Global Exchange).

movements in the South and the in North, fighting for corporate accountability and democratic control over corporations.."

4. *Proposal by the Committee for Cancellation of the Third World Debt as an alternative to Neoliberal Type Adjustment Programs in Southern Countries.*[30] This alternative to the present development strategy would entail three phases: 1) ending of structural adjustment policies; 2) adoption of partly self-based development models; such models would entail constructing sufficiently solid internal economic foundations to allow the country to open up to international trading. This type of development involves creating politically and economically integrated zones, bringing to bear endogenous development models, strengthening internal markets, creating local savings funds for local financing, developing education and health, setting up progressive taxation and other mechanisms to ensure the redistribution of wealth, diversifying exports, introducing agrarian reform to guarantee universal access to land for small farmers and urban reform to guarantee universal access to housing, etc; 3) acting upon trading practices. This would entail six elements: a) mechanisms guaranteeing a better price for the basket of products exported on the world market by developing countries would be introduced. These might include stabilizing the prices of raw materials, building up regulatory stocks - which means doing away with zero stocks, etc.; b) developing countries would be encouraged to establish cartels of producer countries; c) the right of each country (or group of countries) to nutritional autonomy and self-sufficiency in staples would be guaranteed — implying protection measures for imports, in total opposition to the minimal agricultural export quota of 5% imposed by the WTO on member countries; d) rules of global trading to become subordinate to strict environmental, social and cultural criteria would be enforced.; e) public services in the general interest would be excluded from the General Agreement

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[30] The proposal was submitted to WSF 2002 by Eric Toussaint and Arnaud Zacharie, representing the Committee.

on Trade and Services (GATS); f) the trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) agreement would be abolished.

5. *Proposal by IRAM*[31] *for agrarian reform and land policy.* It presents a synthesis of proposals for agrarian reform and land policies as being developed (for the purpose of producing a practice-oriented workbook) in several stages on the basis of discussions with researchers, development specialists and representatives of small farmers' organizations in various world regions.

Merlet proposes that first the discussion of land rights be reframed from one of those who "own" the land to one of those who "use" the land, or rather the differentiation between a legal recognition and a social definition of land rights. From that base he proposes several measures for addressing land rights as a public policy priority in countries with highly unequal land distribution. First, he calls for a system of agrarian reform accompanied by a systematic method for improving agrarian reform policies and putting them into action. This agrarian reform should include a revision of the relationship between collective and individual property and the development of social land management mechanisms as well as greater security of the rights of individual producers. In addition, it should concentrate on developing local capacity for land management whereby peasant/small farmers organizations learn to increasingly coordinate with models of regulation and markets as well as with groups of producers operating on non-reformed land. Finally this process should include the coordination of agrarian reform with agricultural policy, tariff protection on key products, mechanization and modernization policies to promote product quality but compensate for regions disadvantaged in terms of natural resources, etc.

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[31] IRAM - Institute for Research and Application of Methods of Development. The proposal was presented by Michel Merlet (2002).

In countries where the question of access to land is not as severe, he calls for the development of a management policy for agrarian structures "which facilitates the modernization of the units of production and guarantees their social function"; and for the implementation of social "structural" policies directed towards the organization of agrarian structures (including policies that regulate the land market) that fulfill the needs of society as a whole. In addition he emphasizes the need to construct land management bodies which take into account the "multiple rights of different actors" with regard to land and natural resources, as well as the decentralization of a large part of management and administrative systems and the concurrent coordination of national systems with local ones. Finally, he calls 1) for creating networks between peasant organizations, researchers and experts; 2) promoting educational and training programs for all producers and those who deal in the strategic importance of land; 3) carrying out of a lobbying campaign to influence international organizations and bilateral coordination on land issues; 4) developing linkages between rural and urban interests; and 5) promoting the inclusion of the theme of land use and distribution in broader discussion agendas of world poverty and global justice.

6. *Proposals to fight against the commodification and privatization of water and for the right to water.*[32]

Using as an example the Thematic Area II, "Access to Wealth and Sustainability", many proposals were presented concerning water, food sovereignty, knowledges and patents, and health. I mention here the proposal on water.

> Globalize the struggle against the economic system which promotes the destruction and degradation of water and inequality in its distribution, forming a broad civil society coalition including local communities, indigenous people, national and international organizations in the fight for water, in order to:

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[32] On this subject see AAVV, 1994; AAVV, 1997; Petrella and Patkar, 2002; International Conference on Freshwater, 2002; AAVV, 2002; International Committee on Dams, Rivers and People, 2002a, 2002b; Switkes *et al.,* 2002.

1.	Oppose neo-liberal policies of the international financial institutions, the WTO, and regional free trade agreements such as the Free Trade Zone of the Americas, and the commodification and privatization of water.

2.	Oppose unsustainable development projects, such as large dams, industrial waterways, large-scale mining, large-scale agribusiness and others, which destroy and degrade water sources.

Propose and promote sustainable water management alternatives:

1.	Establish a world water parliament, which will implement a global water contract;

2.	Establish an International Convention at the United Nations, on water as a fundamental human right

3.	Organize protests throughout the world during the week 14 March, 2002 (international day of struggle vs. dams) to 22 March (world water day), promoting the fight for water, in opposition to privatization of water, and for the universal right to water, with the slogan "water for life, not for death".

4.	Establish an international treaty on water as a common good, between nation states and indigenous peoples

5.	Form an alliance of social movements on water, to submit to the Sustainable Development Summit in Johannesburg a proposal for a global water agreement.

6.	Ensure adequate supplies of clean water for all individual, community and national water needs (domestic, food production, energy, recreation, maintaining environmental quality).

7.	Support and promote global solidarity with those peoples who suffer the consequences of desertification and drought.

8.	Support the struggle of local communities and national movements for the control of their water sources and distribution systems (ex: Coordinadora de Cochabamba) in resistance to the privatization process and for the re-establishment of sustainable community-management water management systems.

9.	Denounce the systematic persecution of leaders of the Coordinadora del Agua de Cochabamba, including Oscar Olivera, by the Bolivian government.

Sustainable Water Management:

1. Managing water from its sources, through sustainable management of territories and through the effective participation of civil society, in particular indigenous communities, in decision-making processes.

2. Requiring companies that destroy water sources to repair the social and environmental damages they have caused and to restore the quality of these water sources.

3. Prohibiting the use of chemical products that destroy water quality

4. Promoting campaigns against the conversion of rivers into industrial waterways.

5. Using experiences gained during climatic disasters, such as *el Niño*, to promote campaigns for sustainable water management and in resistance to the economic system.

6. Implementing alternative biological systems for sewage management

7. Promoting rainwater harvesting methods for domestic and agricultural use.

The Fight Against Dams

1. To establish a moratorium on new dams until all the economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts they have caused are resolved.

2. To pressure national governments, export credit agencies, and international financial institutions to adopt the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams.

3. To promote a new energy model, based upon efficiency, conservation, and use of alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, and biomass.

4. To support and express solidarity with the populations fighting Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada river in India by signing a petition aimed at the Indian Prime Minister, who will be making a final decision on the project.

Besides proposals of global scope, others of regional scope have been also presented. One of the more consensual ones among Latin American social movements is to sumit ALCA (Free Trade Zone of the Americas) to a referendum in each one of the Latin American countries. The great majority of the proposals have their origin in the articulations among movements concerned with the same thematic area.

Contrary to what the corporate media reports, the WSF has been "a machine of proposals." The design, complexity, and technical detail of many of them is of higher quality than many of those presented by the institutions of neoliberal globalization. The challenge ahead is to press these proposals on to the political agendas of the different states and the international community. It is a long-range challenge because, for these proposals to become part of the political agendas, the national and transnational political institutions must be changed. And, as I mentioned in the previous section, many such institutional changes will occur only on the basis of non-institutional struggles. They will require rebellion, nonviolent but often illegal direct action.

5. The Future of the World Social Forum: Self-democracy and the Theory of Translation

In the WSF the new and the old face each other. As utopia and epistemology, the WSF is something new. As a political phenomenon, its novelty coexists with the traditions of thought on the left or, more generally, counter-hegemonic thought, both in its western and southern and eastern versions. The newness of the WSF is consensually attributed to its absence of leaders and hierarchical organization, its emphasis on cyberspace networks, its ideal of participatory democracy, and its flexibility and readiness to engage in experimentation.

The WSF is unquestionably the first large international progressive movement after the neoliberal backlash at the beginning of the 1980s. Its future is the future of hope in an alternative to *la pensée unique* (single thinking). This future is completely unknown, and can only be speculated about. It depends both on the movements and organizations that comprise the WSF and the metamorphoses of neoliberal globalization. For instance, the fact that the latter has been acquiring a bellicose component fixated on security will no doubt affect the evolution of the WSF. In light of this, the future of the WSF depends in part on the evaluation of its trajectory up till now and the conclusions drawn from it, with a view to enlarge and deepen its counter-hegemonic efficaciousness.

The evaluation of the WSF is one of the exercises that best discloses the confrontation between the new and the old. From the point of view of the old, the WSF cannot but be assessed negatively. It appears as a vast "talk-show" that hovers over the concrete problems of exclusion and discrimination without tackling them; a cultural movement without deep social roots, therefore tolerated and easily coopted by the dominant classes; it has no definite agents or agency, because, after all, it doesn't have any

definite enemies either; its inclusiveness is the other side of its inefficaciousness; its efficaciousness, besides having an effect on the rhetoric of hegemonic discourse, has been minimal, since it has achieved no changes as far as concrete policies go, nor contributed to ameliorate the ills of exclusion and discrimination.

In this evaluation, the WSF is assessed according to criteria that prevailed in progressive struggles up until the 1980s. Such criteria do not concern strategies and tactics alone; they also concern the time frames and geopolitical units that are the reference of their applicability. The time frame is linear time, a time that it gives meaning and direction to history; the temporality or duration is that of the State's action, even if the action aims to reform or revolutionize the State. The geopolitical unit is the national society, the boundary within which the most decisive progressive struggles of the last 150 years have occurred. Let's speak in this case of positivist epistemology.

It seems obvious that the positivist epistemology underlying this evaluation is completely different from the one I ascribed to the WSF above. In order to be minimally adequate, the evaluation of the WSF must be carried out according to the epistemology of the WSF itself. Otherwise, the assessment will be always negative. In other words, the evaluation must be carried out on the basis of the sociology of absences and sociology of emergences. In this case, the geopolitical unit is trans-scale: it combines the local, the national, and the global. Its time is not linear. From the standpoint of linear time, many of the counter-hegemonic experiences will always be absent or impossible. The temporalities of these experiences are indeed multiple, from the instant time of mass protests to the longue durée of utopia.

In this light, the evaluation of the WSF cannot but be positive. By affirming and rendering credible the existence of a counter-hegemonic globalization, the WSF has contributed significantly towards enlarging social experience. It has turned absent struggles

and practices into present struggles and practices, and shown which alternative futures, declared impossible by hegemonic globalization, were after all giving signs of their emergence. By enlarging the available and possible social experience, the WSF created a global consciousness for the different movements and NGOs, regardless of the scope of their action. Such a global consciousness was crucial to create a certain symmetry of scale between hegemonic globalization and the movements and NGOs that fought against it. Before the WSF, the movements and NGOs fought against hegemonic globalization without being aware of their own globality.

The decisive importance of this consciousness explains why the WSF, once aware of it, does everything to preserve it. It explains, ultimately, why the factors of attraction and aggregation prevail over those of repulsion and disaggregation. This consciousness of globality was decisive to make credible among the movements and the NGOs themselves the trans-scale nature of the geopolitical unit wherein they acted. By encompassing all those movements and NGOs, however, the WSF incorporated that same trans-scale nature, and that is why its efficaciousness cannot be assessed exclusively in terms of global changes. It has to be assessed as well in terms of local and national changes. Given all the levels involved, the evaluation of the WSF's efficaciousness is undoubtedly more complex, but for that same reason it does not allow for rash assessments derived from positivist epistemology.

The WSF is today a more realistic utopia than when it first appeared. Increased realism, however, poses considerable challenges to utopia itself. The challenges consist in deepening its political existence without losing its utopian and epistemological integrity. I identify two main challenges, one short-range, the other long-range.

Self-democracy

The first, short-range challenge I designate as self-democracy. The WSF's utopia concerns emancipatory democracy. In its broadest sense, emancipatory democracy is the whole process of changing power relations into relations of shared authority. Since the power relations against which the WSF resists are multiple, the processes of radical democratization in which the WSF is involved are likewise multiple. In brief, the WSF is a large collective process for deepening democracy. Since this is the WSF's utopian distinction, it is no wonder that the issue of internal democracy has become more and more pressing. In fact, the WSF's credibility in its struggle for democracy in society depends on the credibility of its internal democracy.

The WSF's initial phase corresponds, as I said, to the three main forums held in Porto Alegre, together with all the others - local, national, regional, and thematic - also held under the aegis of the WSF. It was a phase of beginnings and consolidation. The organizing structure, in the case of the WSF, was based on the IC and OC. In the case of the others, it depended on ad hoc committees constituted through "contact groups" connected with movements and NGOs that in general had taken part in one of the editions of the WSF. For this phase, the organizing structures were, to my mind, the most appropriate. Admittedly, the criteria of representation and participation could have been better tuned up to the diversity of the movements and NGO's. But it should be stressed that the successive editions of the WSF tried to respond to the criticisms advanced. If the response was not always satisfactory, I believe the reason has more to do with administrative incapacity than politically motivated design.

The challenge consists in changing the organizing structure according to the demands of the new phase, with a view to deepening the internal democracy of such a structure. Two paths to reach this goal may be identified. One of them consists in transferring the

WSF's core from the global event to the national, regional, and thematic forums. The point here is that at this more circumscribed levels the issues of representation and participatory democracy are easier to solve. The WSF, as a global event, will continue to affirm the globality of counter-hegemonic globalization, but it will lose some of its centrality. The OC will continue to have a decisive role, but a role that will tend to be increasingly more executive, while the IC will continue to be charged with defining the broad thematic options and the organizing structure. The democratizing effort must therefore focus on the IC, urging it to go on reflecting on the multiple diversities that congregate in the WSF. This path, which seems to be close to what some members of the IC have been proposing, assumes its continuity with the previous phase. The aim is not to take decisions that might put at stake the extraordinary successes achieved so far.

This path does not claim to solve the issue of participatory democracy. That is to say, however representative and democratic the leading and organizing structures of the forums may be, the issue of the participation of the rank-and-file will be always there, whether participation concerns the debates or decisions taken in a given forum about the next forums. As I have suggested above, the information and communication technologies offer today new possibilities to resort to voting and carrying out referendums during the forums. If it is true in general that cyberdemocracy has an individualistic bias in its reducing the citizen's political capacity to handling the terminal, it is no less true that such a bias is neutralized by the meetings of the forum, where intercommunication — the exchange of experiences and points of view — is so intense, precisely among the rank-and-file.

The second, far more structured path aims to increase the WSF's internal democracy constructing it from bottom up. On the basis of the smaller forums or forums of narrower scope, such as local or city forums, representative structures are created at the different levels in such a way that the structures at the higher ranks are elected by the immediately

lower ranks. The result envisaged is a pyramidal organization having at the tip the WSF turned into a forum of delegates. The most recent and complete version of this path is the one proposed by Michael Albert, of Znet. According to the proposal's author himself, it has some thoughts that "may have some merit", "but whether they do or not," he adds, "certainly changes must be made". Here are the main points of Albert's (2003) proposal:

1. Emphasize local forums as the foundation of the worldwide forum process;

2. Have each new level of forums, from towns, to cities, to countries, to continents, to the world, be built largely on those below;

3. Have the decision-making leadership of the most local events locally determined;

4. Have the decision-making leadership at each higher level chosen, at least in considerable part, by the local forums that are within the higher entity. Italy's national forum leadership is chosen by the smaller local forums in Italy. The European forums' leadership is chosen by the national forums within Europe, and similarly elsewhere.

5. Mandate that the decision-making leadership at every level should be at least 50% women;

6. Have the forums from wealthier parts of the world charge delegates and organizations and attendees a tax on their fees to apply to helping finance the forums in poorer parts of the world and subsidize delegate attendance at the world forum from poorer locales, as well.

7. Have the WSF attendance be 5,000-10,000 people delegated to it from the major regional forums around the world. Have the WSF leadership be selected by regional forums. Mandate the WSF to share and compare and propose based on all that is emerging worldwide – not to listen again to the same famous speakers who everyone hears worldwide all the time anyhow – and have the WSF's results, like those of all other forums, published and public, and of course reported by delegates back to the regions;

8. Ensure that the WSF as a whole and the forums worldwide not make the mistake of trying to become an international, a movement of movements, or even just a voice of the world's movements. To be a forum, the WSF and the smaller component forums need to be as broad and diverse as possible. But, being that broad and that diverse, is simply being too broad and too diverse to be an organization.

9. Mandate that the forums at every level, including the WSF, welcome people from diverse constituencies using the forums and their processes to make contacts and to develop ties that can in turn yield national, regional, or even international networks or movements of movements which do share sufficiently their political aspirations to work closely together, but which exist alongside rather than instead of the forum phenomenon.

The above proposal, besides recommending the pyramidal construction of the WSF's democracy, includes measures that aim to correct structural deficiencies of representation,

derived for example, from sexual and North/South inequality and difference. This proposal poses a radical break with the organizational model adopted up until now. Although there is a widespread feeling that the present model is exhausted, one suspects that such a radical break may stir up the fear that one might be throwing away the baby with the bath water. It is, however, as Michael Albert himself asserts, a proposal to be discussed. Needless to say, any proposal, especially one so radical, must be debated and ultimately voted. But by whom? By the current IC, certainly not representative of the whole WSF let alone democratically elected by its members? By the participants of the forums? Which forums? These questions show that there is no machinery of democratic engineering capable of solving the problem of internal democracy at a single blow. To my mind, such a problem will end up being taken care of through successive partial solutions. Its cumulative effect will be the result of a learning process which, on each democratization landing, consolidates its force and gathers energy to venture on to an upper landing.

The theory of translation

The second challenge is long-range. The challenge of internal democracy concerns the processes of decision making, rather than the content of the decisions, let alone the practices of struggle that may evolve thereof. In the long run, the evaluation of the WSF will depend on its capacity to transform the immense energy that is congregated in itself into new forms of counter-hegemonic agency — more efficacious forms because combining the strength of different social movements and NGOs.

The political theory of western modernity, whether in its liberal or Marxist version, constructed the unity of action from the agent's unity. According to it, the coherence and meaning of social change was always based on the capacity of the privileged agent of change, be it the bourgeoisie or the working classes, to represent the totality from which

the coherence and meaning derived. From such capacity of representation derived both the need and operationality of a general theory of social change.

The utopia and epistemology underlying the WSF place it in the antipodes of such a theory. The extraordinary energy of attraction and aggregation revealed by the WSF resides precisely in refusing the idea of a general theory. The diversity that finds a haven in it is free from the fear of being cannibalized by false universalisms or false single strategies propounded by any general theory. The WSF underwrites Ernst Bloch's idea that the world is an inexhaustible totality, as it holds many totalities, all of them partial (Bloch, 1995). According to this conception of the world, there is no sense in attempting to grasp the world by any single grand theory, because any such general theory always presupposes the monoculture of a given totality and the homogeneity of its parts. The time we live in, whose recent past was dominated by the idea of a general theory, is perhaps a time of transition that may be defined in the following way: we have no need of a general theory, but still need a general theory on the impossibility of a general theory. We need, at any rate, a negative universalism that may give rise to the ecologies made possible by the sociology of absences.

I cannot pursue this point here. I shall concentrate rather on what derives from it: What is the alternative to the general theory? To my mind, the alternative to a general theory is the work of translation. Translation is the procedure that allows for mutual intelligibility among the experiences of the world, both available and possible, as revealed by the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences.

The WSF is witness to the wide multiplicity and variety of social practices of counter-hegemony that occur all over the world. Its strength derives from having corresponded or given expression to the aspiration of aggregation and articulation of the different social movements and NGOs, an aspiration that had been only latent up until

then. The movements and the NGOs constitute themselves around a number of more or less confined goals, create their own forms and styles of resistance, and specialize in certain kinds of practice and discourse that distinguish them form the others. Thus is constituted the identity that separates each movement from all the others. The feminist movement distinguishes itself from the labor movement, both distinguish themselves from the indigenous movement or the ecological movement, and so on and so forth. All these distinctions have actually translated themselves into very practical differences, if not even into contradictions that contribute to bringing the movements apart and create rivalries and factionalisms. Hence derives the fragmentation and atomization that are the dark side of diversity and multiplicity.

This dark side has lately been acknowledged by the movements and NGOs. The truth is, however, that none of them individually has had the capacity or credibility to confront it, for, in attempting it, it runs the risk of falling prey to the situation it wishes to remedy. Hence the extraordinary step taken by the WSF. It must be admitted, however, that the aggregation and articulation made possible by the WSF is low intensity. The goals are limited and circumscribe themselves to recognizing differences and wishing for exchange in order to make the differences more explicit and better known. Under these circumstances, joint action cannot but be limited. A good example was the European Social Forum. The differences, rivalries, and factionalisms that divide the various movements and NGOs that organized it are well known and have a history that is impossible to erase. This is why, in their positive response to the WSF's request to organize the ESF, the movements and NGOs that took up the task felt the need to assert that the differences among them were as sharp as ever and that they were coming together only with a very limited objective in mind: to organize the Forum and a Peace March. The

Forum was indeed organized in such a way that the differences could be made very explicit.

The challenge that counter-hegemonic globalization faces now may be formulated in the following way. The aggregation and articulation made possible by the WSF were enough to achieve the goals of the phase that has now reached its end. However, deepening the WSF's goals requires forms of aggregation and articulation of higher intensity. Such a process includes articulating struggles and resistances, as well as promoting ever more comprehensive and consistent alternatives. Such articulations presuppose combinations among the different social movements and NGOs that are bound to question their very identity and autonomy as they have been conceived of so far. If the idea is to promote counter-hegemonic practices and knowledges that have the collaboration of ecological, pacifist, indigenous, feminist, workers' and other movements, and if the idea it to go about this horizontally and with respect for the identity of every movement, an enormous effort of mutual recognition, dialogue, and debate will be required to carry out the task.

This is the only way to identify more rigorously what divides and unites the movements, so as to base the articulations of practices and knowledges on what unites them, rather than on what divides them. Such a task entails a wide exercise in translation to enlarge reciprocal intelligibility without destroying the identity of what is translated. The point is to create, in every movement or NGO, in every practice or strategy, in every discourse or knowledge, a contact zone that may render it porous and hence permeable to other NGOs, practices, strategies, discourses, and knowledges. The exercise of translation aims to identify and potentiate what is common in the diversity of counter-hegemonic drive. Canceling out what separates is out of the question. The goal is to have host-difference replace fortress-difference. Through translation work, diversity is celebrated, not

as a factor of fragmentation and isolationism, but rather as a factor of sharing and solidarity.

To describe fully the procedures of the translation work is beyond the limits of this paper. Elsewhere I have proposed translations between the concept of human rights and the Hindu and Islamic concepts of human dignity; between western strategies of development and Ghandi's *swadeshi* (Santos, 2002b); between western philosophy and African oral *sagesse* (Santos, in press); between "modern" democracy and traditional authorities (Santos, 2003b); between the indigenous movement and the ecological movement; between the workers' movement and the feminist movement. To be successful, the work of translation depends on demanding conditions. Nonetheless, the effort must be taken up. On it depends the future of counter-hegemonic globalization.

To conclude I would suggest the discussion of the main themes proposed by WSF 1 to 3 and the WSF 2004, in the sense that it will help explaining the question of translation, that is, that there are different central issues in distinct parts of the world, and we cannot afford to 'localize' any of them.

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Annex:

<center>

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM – CHARTER OF PRINCIPLES
(The areas in *italic* are the different ones)

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Original Version	Indian Version
Approved and adopted in São Paulo, on April 9, 2001, by the organizations that make up the World Social Forum Organizing Committee, approved with modifications by the World Social Forum International Council on June 10, 2001.	*The consultation of Indian organisations and individuals that took place in the city of Bhopal in India, on April 19-20 2002, and that constituted the World Social Forum-India It was decided that WSF's Charter for India needs to be evolved with certain additions required for India. It accordingly entrusted the task to the WSF India Working Committee..* *Starting with the original Preamble to the WSF Charter of Principles, as prepared by the Brazil Organising Committee, the following constitutes the revised text as prepared by the WSF India Working Committee.*
1. The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a *planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humanking and between it and the Earth*.	**1.** The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building *a world order centred on the human person.*
2. The World Social Forum at Porto Alegre was an event localized in time and place. *From now on, in the certainty proclaimed at Porto Alegre* that "another world is possible", it becomes a permanent process of seeking and building alternatives, which cannot be reduced to the events supporting it.	**2.** The World Social Forum at Porto Alegre – *held from January 25th – 30th, 2001,* was an event localized in time and place. *With the Porto Alegre Proclamation* that "another world is possible", it becomes a permanent process of seeking and building alternatives, which cannot be reduced to the events supporting it.
3. The World Social Forum is a world process. All the meetings that are held as part of this process have an international dimension.	**3.** The World Social Forum is a world process. All the meetings that are held as part of this process have an international dimension.
4. The alternatives proposed at the World Social Forum stand in opposition to a process of globalization commanded by the large multinational corporations and by the governments and international institutions at the service of those corporation's interests, *with the complicity of national governments*. They are designed to ensure that globalization in solidarity will prevail as a new stage in world history. This will respect universal human rights, and those of all citizens - men and women - of all nations and the environment and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.	**4.** The alternatives proposed at the World Social Forum stand in opposition to a process of *capitalist* globalisation commanded by the large multinational corporations and by the governments and international institutions at the service of those corporations' interests. They are designed to ensure that globalisation in solidarity will prevail as a new stage in world history. This will respect universal human rights, and those of all citizens – men and women – of all nations and the environment and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.
5. The World Social Forum brings together and interlinks only organizations and movements of civil society from all the countries in the world, but intends neither to be a body representing world civil society.	**5.** The World Social Forum brings together and interlinks only organisations and movements of civil society from all the countries in the world, but intends neither to be a body representing world civil society *nor to exclude from the debates it promotes those in positions of political responsibility, mandated by their peoples, who decide to enter into the commitments resulting from those debates.*

6. The meetings of the World Social Forum do not deliberate on behalf of the World Social Forum as a body. No-one, therefore, will be authorized, on behalf of any of the editions of the Forum, to express positions claiming to be those of all its participants. The participants in the Forum shall not be called on to take decisions as a body, whether by vote or acclamation, on declarations or proposals for action that would commit all, or the majority, of them and that propose to be taken as establishing positions of the Forum as a body. *It thus does not constitute a locus of power to be disputed by the participants in its meetings, nor does it intend to constitute the only option for interrelation and action by the organizations and movements that participate in it.*	**6.** The meetings of the World Social Forum do not deliberate on behalf of the World Social Forum as a body. No one, therefore, will be authorized, on behalf of any of the editions of the Forum, to express positions claiming to be those of all its participants. The participants in the Forum shall not be called on to take decisions as a body, whether by vote or acclamation, on declarations or proposals for action that would commit all, or the majority, of them and that propose to be taken as establishing positions of the Forum as a body.
7. Nonetheless, organizations or groups of organizations that participate in the Forum's meetings must be assured the right, during such meetings, to deliberate on declarations or actions they may decide on, whether singly or in coordination with other participants. The World Social Forum undertakes to circulate such decisions widely by the means at its disposal, without directing, *hierarchizing*, censuring or restricting them, but as deliberations of the organizations or groups of organizations that made the decisions.	**7.** Nonetheless, organisations or groups of organisations that participate in the Forum's meetings must be assured the right, during such meetings, to deliberate on declarations or actions they may decide on, whether singly or in coordination with other participants. The World Social Forum undertakes to circulate such decisions widely by the means at its disposal, without directing, *creating hierarchies*, censuring or restricting them, but as deliberations of the organisations or groups of organisations that made the decisions.
8. The World Social Forum is a plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context that, in a decentralized fashion, interrelates organizations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels from the local to the international to built another world.	**8.** The World Social Forum is a plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context that, in a decentralized fashion, interrelates organisations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels, from the local to the international -- to built another world. *It thus does not constitute a locus of power to be disputed by the participants in its meetings, nor does it intend to constitute the only option for interrelation and action by the organisations and movements that participate in it.*
9. *The World Social Forum will always be a forum open to pluralism and to the diversity of activities and ways of engaging of the organizations and movements that decide to participate in it, as well as the diversity of genders, ethnicities, cultures, generations and physical capacities, providing they abide by this Charter of Principles. Neither party representations nor military organizations shall participate in the Forum. Government leaders and members of legislatures who accept the commitments of this Charter may be invited to participate in a personal capacity.*	**9.** *The World Social Forum asserts democracy as the avenue to resolving society's problems politically. As a meeting place, it is open to pluralism and to the diversity of activities and ways of engaging of the organisations and movements that decide to participate in it, as well as the diversity of genders, races, ethnicities and cultures.*
10. The World Social Forum is opposed to all *totalitarian* and reductionist views of *economy, development and* history and to the use of violence as a means of social control by the State. It upholds respect for Human Rights, *the practices of real democracy, participatory democracy*, peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity, among people, *ethnicities*, genders and peoples, and condemns all forms of domination and all subjection of one person by another.	**10.** The World Social Forum is opposed to all *authoritarian* and reductionist views of history and to the use of violence as a means of social control by the State. It upholds respect for Human Rights, for peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity, among people, *races*, genders and peoples, and condemns all forms of domination and all subjection of one person by another.

	11. *The meetings of the World Social Forum are always open to all those who wish to take part in them, except organisations that seek to take people's lives as a method of political action and those organisations that exclude groups / communities based on ethnic, racial, religious or caste considerations from the democratic world.*
	12. *The WSF process in India must necessarily make space for all struggling sections of society to come together and articulate their struggles and visions, individually and collectively, against the neo- liberal economic agenda of the world and national elite, which is breaking down the very fabric of the lives of ordinary people all over the world and marginalizing the majority of the world people, keeping profits as the main criteria of development rather than society and destroying the freedoms and rights of all women, men, and children to live in peace, security, and dignity. It must make space for workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, dalits, women, hawkers, minorities, immigrants, students, academicians, artisans, artists and other members of the creative world, professionals, the media, and for local businessmen and industrialists, as well as for parliamentarians, sympathetic bureaucrats and other concerned sections from within and outside the state. Most importantly, it must make space for all the 'sections' of society that remain less visible, marginalized, unrecognised, and oppressed.*
	13. *In India today, all civil and political organisations/groups that are organising around people's issues -- economic, political, social, and cultural -- are being profoundly challenged by the religious and political intolerance that is raging in the country, and increasingly across the world. There is the threat of growing communal fascism and fundamentalism. The WSF India will strive to encourage a process that allows all of those who are combating communal fascism and fundamentalism to come together, to hear and understand each other, to explore areas of common interest, and also our differences, and to learn from the experiences and struggles of people here and in other countries*
	14. *The WSF India process involves not only events but also different activities across the country. These processes, in the spirit of the WSF, would be open, inclusive and flexible and designed to build capabilities of local groups and movements. The process should also be designed to seek and draw out peoples' perceptions regarding the impact of neo-liberal economic policies and imperialism on their daily lives. The language of dissent and resistance towards these will have to be informed by local idioms and forms.*
	15. *WSF India will strive as far as possible for self reliance based on local resources generation in its activities. However, recognising that global solidarity, against the global neo-liberal agenda*

	may involve international events. For such events and activities, resources may need to be mobilised from external resources.
11. As a forum for debate, the World Social Forum is a movement of ideas that prompts reflection, and the transparent circulation of the results of that reflection, on the mechanisms and instruments of domination by capital, on means and actions to resist and overcome that domination, and on the alternatives proposed to solve the problems of exclusion and *social* inequality that the process of capitalist globalization *with its racist, sexist and environmentally destructive dimensions* is creating internationally and within countries.	**16.** As a forum for debate, the World Social Forum is a movement of ideas that prompts reflection, and the *maximum possible* transparent circulation of the results of that reflection, on the mechanisms and instruments of domination by capital, on means and actions to resist and overcome that domination, and on the alternatives *that can be* proposed to solve the problems of exclusion and inequality that the process of capitalist globalisation *currently prevalent* is creating *or aggravating*, internationally and within countries.
12. As a framework for the exchange of experiences, the World Social Forum encourages understanding and mutual recognition among its participant organizations and movements, and places special value on *the exchange among them, particularly* on all that society is building to centre economic activity and political action on meeting the needs of people and respecting nature, *in the present and for future generations.*	**17.** As a framework for the exchange of experiences, the World Social Forum encourages understanding and mutual recognition among its participant organisations and movements, and places special value on all that society is building to centre economic activity and political action on meeting the needs of people and respecting nature.
13. As a context for interrelations, the World Social Forum seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organizations and movements of society, that - in both public and private life - will increase the capacity for *non-violent* social resistance to the process of dehumanization the world is undergoing *and to the violence used by the State*, and reinforce the humanizing measures being taken by the action of these movements and organizations.	**18.** As a context for interrelations, the World Social Forum seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organisations and movements of civil society, that – in both public and private life – will increase the capacity for social resistance to the process of dehumanisation the world is undergoing and reinforce the humanizing measures being taken by the action of these movements and organisations.
14. The World Social Forum is a process that encourages its participant organizations and movements to situate their actions, *from the local level to the national level and seeking active participation in international contexts*, as issues of *planetary* citizenship, and to introduce onto the global agenda the change-inducing practices that they are experimenting in building a new world *in solidarity.*	**19.** The World Social Forum is a process that encourages its participant organisations and movements to situate their actions as issues of *world* citizenship, and to introduce onto the global agenda the change-inducing practices that they are experimenting in building a new world.