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## Is an Alternative Globalization Possible?

by

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# Is an Alternative Globalization Possible?\*

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*Building on Polanyi's concept of the "double-movement" through which society defends itself against domination by the self-regulating market, this article sets out some key organizational and ideological hurdles that the contemporary "movement of movements" must surmount to challenge the hegemony of neo-liberal globalization. After outlining neo-liberalism's failures, it makes an argument for the possibility of "counter-hegemonic globalization," defined as a globally organized project of transformation aimed at replacing the dominant (hegemonic) global regime with one that maximizes democratic political control and makes the equitable development of human capabilities and environmental stewardship its priorities.*

**Keywords:** *globalization; social movements; transnational networks; neo-liberalism; Polanyi*

In 2007, Steve Lerner, director for the Service Employees International Union's property services division, advanced an audacious proposition, arguing for the creation of a global union that organizes the top two dozen multinational

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property services companies in the twenty cities around the globe most critical to their profits.<sup>1</sup> “Contrary to conventional wisdom,” he argued, “the spread of multinational corporations and the increasing concentration of capital have created the conditions that can turn globalization on its head. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

By arguing that contemporary neo-liberal globalization had created conditions that could “turn globalization on its head,” Lerner joined a variegated group of transnational activists, ranging from human rights advocates, to feminists, to environmentalists. In the decade since the “battle of Seattle” in 1999, transnational social movements have gained salience, both in the popular media and in social science scholarship.<sup>3</sup>

But is the assemblage of such movements, even if they were to include a revitalized, globally-oriented labor movement, capable of “turning globalization on its head?” Or are such movements merely an interesting socio-cultural epiphenomenon, useful perhaps in drawing attention to the worst excesses of neo-liberal globalization, but incapable of generating the kind of political power that could generate real changes in the structures of economic and political power at the global level?

Arguing for the obdurate persistence of global capitalism is easier than making a case for the possibility of progressive transformation. Persistence is always the strongest hypothesis, and reasons for rejecting it are usually apparent only after the fact. Yet, exploring the conditions under which transformation might trump persistence should be a part of any analysis of future trajectories.

## INTRODUCTION

What follows here is an argument for the possibility of “counter-hegemonic globalization,” defined as a globally organized project of transformation aimed at replacing the dominant (hegemonic) global regime with one that maximizes democratic political control and makes the equitable development of human capabilities and environmental stewardship its priorities. I start from Karl Polanyi’s basic premise that no socio-political order whose priority is to give pre-eminence to the self-regulating market is sustainable.<sup>4</sup> The initial argument then is that neo-liberal globalization, despite its obvious violations in practice of “free market principles,” is still prey to Polanyi’s thesis. Therefore, the current ruling order, as powerful as it might appear, is unsustainable. It is incapable of protecting society and nature, on the one hand, and incapable of protecting capital from the potential chaos of its own markets on the other hand. It is even becoming an impediment to pursuit of the Smithian task of efficiently using human capital and knowledge to maximize increases in material output.

My second step will be to propose the optimistic hypothesis that progressive movements for social protection should be included among the viable contenders to shape the succession from neo-liberal globalization. I will argue, following Lerner’s lead, that neo-liberal globalization has created a set of

socio-cultural, ideological, organizational, and even economic, conditions that enhance the potential for counter-hegemonic globalization.

To make this case, I will specify some of the political, organizational, and ideological conditions that this assemblage of movements would need to meet to have a chance of realizing that potential, while adducing examples of current practice that are consistent with meeting these conditions. The analysis is optimistic, but the conditionality of the optimism is crucial. The organizational structures and ideological moves required still remain largely hypothetical possibilities, partially prefigured, but never fully realized by current movements. To underscore the conditionality, I will also explore competing actors and scenarios that, with equal or greater plausibly, might push the unraveling of the current world order along other, less hopeful trajectories.

Theoretically, my arguments are in debt to Polanyi.<sup>5</sup> Polanyi's particular recasting of Marx's theory of social change has special resonance in the contemporary neo-liberal era (its irritating "organicism" and the vague versions of political causality that this "organcism" allows notwithstanding). First, Polanyi's insistence that the problem is not simply the competition-driven rapaciousness of capitalists in search of maximal profits, but the even more basic failure of the market as an institutional foundation for social organization, anticipates with an eerie surefootedness, contemporary critiques of global neo-liberalism. Second, his vision of the counter-movements engendered by the failures of the self-regulating market offer a heuristically fruitful starting point for the analysis of contemporary global movements. "Neo-Polanyian optimism" is a natural starting point for anyone interested in counter-hegemonic globalization.

In Polanyi's "double movement," efforts to instantiate the self-regulated market spark a spontaneous reaction. The threat to society cannot help but generate a movement for social protection. Polanyi's "movements for social protection" were an amorphous conglomerate of social interests ranging from radical workers to conservative landowners.<sup>6</sup> While initiated in pursuit of particular sectoral interests, their political impact depended on their ability to transcend particular goals and represent the "breadth and variety" of society's interest in protecting society and nature from the ravages wrought by the untrammelled dominion of the self-regulating market.<sup>7</sup> In short, Polanyi's account anticipates the agglomeration of movements postulated by counter-hegemonic globalization.

There is, however, one key difference between the oppositional moment in Polanyi's double movement and the idea of counter-hegemonic globalization. Polanyi's analysis of the rise of the market was emphatically global, but the movements for social protection that he described were an essentially disconnected set of national movements, each with goals and strategies determined by the place of its own nation state within the larger global market. The societies that tried to protect themselves were national societies. Facing similar threats, national responses shared pivotal elements, but there was no effective transnational organization.

Arguably, it was precisely the inability of Polanyi's movements for social protection to organize at a level commensurate with the scale of the system they were trying to change that doomed the world to endure two world wars and a Great Depression. Despite the eventual success of movements for social protection in generating Keynesian welfare states in the most privileged national societies, they proved incapable of reshaping the fundamental character of the global political economy.

Polanyi does not emphasize this point in his analysis of the great transformation. Assuming the world's political leaders have "learned their lesson," he appears to conclude that the spontaneous quest of individual societies to re-embed markets in society will receive support from conventional forms of international organization. This may have been a reasonable assumption in 1944. As Ruggie's analysis of "embedded liberalism" and the relative success of the post-World War II "golden age of capitalism" indicate,<sup>8</sup> national movements for social protection in the industrial North combined with rudimentary forms of international governance did work, for some of the world, for almost a generation.

By the end of the millennium, the world's political leadership had unlearned the lessons of the first half of the twentieth century. Pressure from below was insufficient to force them to do otherwise. Movements for social protection operating at the national level, coupled with rudimentary mid-twentieth century institutions of global governance, were even less able to counteract the global dominion of the self-regulated market than they had been in the early twentieth century.

Looking at this trajectory, it is easy to come to pessimistic conclusions. If movements for social protection couldn't prevent economic chaos and military cataclysm in the first third of the twentieth century, why should they succeed in the twenty-first century? Some would argue that, despite the failures of neo-liberalism, successful movements for social protection are even further from our grasp than they were 100 years ago.

This contemporary "structural pessimism" assumes that neo-liberal globalization has not only undercut Polanyi's optimistic hopes that elites would recognize the necessity of international governance, but also made it impossible to replicate movements for social protection even at the national level. Indeed, as Ruggie has observed,<sup>9</sup> global rules now impinge on what was once considered domestic policy to a far greater degree under neo-liberalism than during the original rise of the global liberal regime, further undercutting the efficacy of purely national efforts.

In the structural pessimist vision, nation states, apparently frightened of being punished by global financial markets, operate as though "there is no alternative" (TINA) were true—claiming that their hands are tied when confronted by their citizens' demands for social protection. Lacking a responsive nation state, it becomes difficult for social movements to gain traction around progressive agendas at the national level. In the structural pessimist vision, if movements for social protection faltered at national borders in the original effort to

counter the dislocations imposed by the rise of the self-regulated market, global neo-liberalism cuts them down even at the national level.

The “structural pessimists” follow the conventional view regarding the relation between neo-liberal globalization and what might be called “generic globalization.” “Generic globalization” is the shrinking of geographic space and the increased permeability of physical and political boundaries that have followed from the twentieth century’s revolutionary transformation of information and communication technologies and the only slightly less revolutionary changes in transportation. In the conventional wisdom, generic globalization is the handmaiden of neo-liberal globalization and cannot be otherwise.<sup>10</sup>

Neo-liberalism has indeed used the tools provided by generic globalization to construct a global system of domination. But generic globalization and the specific system of domination that made use of it in the late-twentieth century are not symbiotic in the long run. Generic globalization can also be seen as a repertoire of tools and resources potentially available to a range of political projects, including progressive ones. Seeing this new repertoire of tools and resources as something that can be appropriated by alternative projects is fundamental to the idea of counter-hegemonic globalization.

A counter-hegemonic globalization perspective looks at the effects of globalization on the vitality of national movements for social protection from precisely the opposite perspective as structural pessimism. It does not deny that neo-liberal globalization constrains national state apparatuses and makes it more difficult for social protection movements to rely on responses from national governments. But it points to the simultaneous expansion of possibilities for trumping national constraints by organizing at the global level. If movements for social protection can exploit the repertoire of technological tools and the social, cultural, and organizational resources provided by generic globalization, Polanyi’s “double movement” does not have to be flummoxed by the increased importance of organizing on a global scale. Neo-Polanyian optimism rests on the proposition that generic globalization (and neo-liberal globalization) has changed the world in ways that enable contemporary movements for social protection to organize globally in a way that they could not 100 years ago.

Like Polanyi’s “movements for social protection,” counter-hegemonic globalization is a process. My analysis will focus on the process of counter-hegemonic globalization rather than on trying to envisage the alternative institutional architecture that might be constructed if the process succeeds.<sup>11</sup> This choice implies at least two assumptions about how change works. Since neither assumption is laid out in Polanyi’s analysis, they need to be made explicit here. First, movements build political power through contestation, and building political power is the most important prerequisite for constructing alternative institutions. Second, contestation creates opportunities for movements to experiment with new

practices prefiguring the democratic management of collective affairs that must be central to any progressive alternative institutional architecture.

Explicating the negative side of Polanyi's argument is as important as exploring the oppositional side of the double movement. Before analyzing the ways in which the global order creates an "enabling" environment for oppositional movements, it is worth setting out the failures of current efforts to impose the "utopian ideal of the self-regulating market." Polanyi's analysis of the lack of sustainability of a regime that subordinates society to the market seems even more apt now than in the historical period from which he derived his argument.

#### THE FAILURES OF NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALIZATION

The existing structure of global power is still best characterized as "global neo-liberalism," despite the persistent imposition of rules and resource allocation based on the political interests of the powerful and despite the growing importance of neo-mercantilist rivalries among major powers. It continues to be a system in which the superiority of market allocation is ideologically unquestioned by dominant elites. It continues to be a system in which the rights of capital are the most important foundation of economic and political power. Therefore, it continues to suffer from exactly the problems that Polanyi's analysis would lead us to expect.

Baroness Thatcher did not doubt that everyone would be forced to accept the TINA proposition: "there is no alternative" to allow private markets to dominate all other modes of social organization. By the end of the twentieth century, her confidence seemed anachronistic. The ideological vulnerability of neo-liberalism was apparent. It was being taken apart from every possible intellectual perspective. Attacks from critical intellectuals in the North<sup>12</sup> were to be expected, as were critiques from intellectuals based in the global South.<sup>13</sup> Nor was it surprising to find that Marxist frameworks provided foundations for highly critical analysis of the effects and prospects of the neo-liberal world order.<sup>14</sup>

What had to be more disturbing from the perspective of believers in TINA was to find conservative intellectuals like John Gray talking about "the delusions of global capitalism"<sup>15</sup> and one of the world's most accomplished global financiers writing about "the capitalist threat."<sup>16</sup> Perhaps most damaging of all to the credibility of neo-liberalism was the work of prominent international economists,<sup>17</sup> sharply critical of both the theory and practice of neo-liberal globalization.

Widespread disillusionment with neo-liberal globalization stems, as Polanyi would have expected, from the failure of society to make the market serve social ends. Concretely, this failure takes two closely interconnected forms. The first is failure to construct social mechanisms for doing what markets are inherently incapable of doing—protecting people and nature from inordinate manmade risks and from being treated as "externalities." The second is inability to govern



markets and discipline capital so that capitalists themselves are protected from the potential chaos of unregulated markets and are compelled by competitive pressures to perform their Smithian role of “revolutionizing the means of production.”

*Failing to Deliver Social Protection and Collective Goods*

Nature and markets generate risks. Society is reasonably supposed to mitigate them. Neo-liberalism is congenitally blind to the need for social protection. On a variety of fronts, ranging from provision of health care to terms of employment, late-twentieth century risks were shifted from governments and corporations to individuals with far less capacity to bear them.<sup>18</sup> As observers from Polanyi to Chua<sup>19</sup> have observed, the consequences of failure to mitigate risk and deliver social protection go beyond directly deleterious effects on individuals and families. Failure to provide social protection is likely to have a corrosive effect on social relations and communities—in Polanyi’s dramatic rendition, “annihilating the human and natural substance of society.”<sup>20</sup>

Failures in the realm of social protection are analytically connected, in turn, to delivery of collective goods, always a weakness of market-based systems. Health care is the archetypal case. It can be considered a fundamental component of social protection whose core components should be treated as collective goods with positive spillovers, or it can be treated simply as a commodity. The latter choice, associated with lower overall health performance relative to resources expended, flows naturally from the logic of neo-liberalism.

Stewardship of the environment is the archetypal collective good and illustrates the way in which the consequences of failure to deliver such goods have been magnified during the period between classic liberalism’s early-twentieth century crisis and neo-liberalism’s current travails. Nature has always been what Polanyi called a “fictitious commodity.” As the human footprint on the planet has grown larger and heavier, the consequences of treating nature as though it were something produced for purchase or exchange and therefore something indefinitely reproducible looked potentially cataclysmic. The idea that human activity could go beyond destroying the natural productivity of particular locales to having a deleterious effect on the habitability of the planet as a whole would have seemed fanciful in 1900. A century later the threat looked more than real; it looked unavoidable, barring heroic public action.

What is clear in the case of environmental collective goods also applies to other collective goods. The repercussions of failure to deliver basic infrastructure are quite different in a country where the population consists of scattered agricultural populations than when people are concentrated in megacities. Inability to provide collective goods to Nigerian agriculturalists in 1900 unquestionably diminished well-being, but the misery and social dislocation generated

by the inability to provide basic collective services to the 15 million citizens of Lagos have global implications of an entirely different order of magnitude.

The evolution of the global economy and society have made the collective goods that markets fail to deliver more central to human well-being. The same process of socio-economic change has made more dangerous the kinds of “negative externalities” that only social regulation can prevent markets from generating. In short, the untrammelled reign of the self-regulated market has become significantly more threatening.

### *Supporting Monopoly Privilege and Limiting the Fruits of Innovation*

Politically protected monopoly rents are at the heart of profitability in the most advanced sectors of the global neo-liberal economy. Profitability for everyone from Big Pharma and their proprietary drugs to Microsoft and its monopoly on Windows depends on gaining and maintaining monopoly control over intangible assets, which can be achieved only by political means. As Block points out, “the political influence of powerful incumbent corporations” is a central feature of the neo-liberal political economy.<sup>21</sup> The connection between control over the relevant political decisions and economic returns is as intimate for modern capitalist firms as it was for nineteenth century Latin American *hacendados*.

Because ideas are the most powerful means of production in the modern economy, politically maintained monopoly power has the same kind of anti-developmental effects that politically maintained monopoly control over land did in an agrarian economy. Instead of every researcher being able to work with the full range of molecular formulas as a starting point for new drugs, use is tightly restricted by companies who can profit handsomely by restricting innovation to me-too variations. What James Boyle calls “the second enclosure movement”<sup>22</sup>—a race to gain monopoly rights over anything from tropical plants to musical chords that have potential to become a profitable intangible asset—continues apace. At the same time, examples like open-source software demonstrate the productive potential of alternative forms of ownership.<sup>23</sup>

This system imposes a long-term cost to global society as a whole. Those whose only capital is the “human capital” they carry in their heads are the most obvious losers. With their access to productive intangible assets rationed to suit the interests of those who monopolize these assets, they become the twenty-first century equivalent of agriculturalists whose access to land is rationed to preserve the power of landlords. Not unexpectedly, the South is the big loser. Neo-liberal property rights and globalized consumption patterns keep rents flowing from Southern consumers to Northern corporations, while only a small fraction of the South’s “human capital” is allowed to generate returns from the productive ideas that are monopolized by these same corporations.

The problem does not just disadvantage the Global South. As Block points out, “durable monopolies” over key technologies “can slow further technological progress to a crawl,” disadvantaging the global economy as a whole. Changes in the rules that might allow for more productive use of ideas are no more likely to emerge out of the politics of global neo-liberalism than proposals for land reform are to emerge out of a parliament dominated by landlords. The more politically entrenched Northern corporations become, the more their interests will act as a “fetter” on technological progress and the more thoroughly returns from intangible assets will be concentrated in the North at the expense of the world’s majority in the South.

Global neo-liberalism enforces rules that protect its most privileged constituencies from the market in ways that restrict technological progress and reduce the world’s potential productivity even as it touts self-regulating markets and imposes their risks and volatility on the less privileged. Far from maximizing economic accumulation, neo-liberalism acts as a fetter on the effective application of the most important modern “forces of production”—ideas and human capital.

Global neo-liberalism’s focus on preserving monopoly control over ideas whose unfettered use would multiple our ability to satisfy human needs connects back directly to failure to provide social protection. Nowhere is this more dramatically evident than in the case of HIV/AIDS, which is so cogently presented by Klug.<sup>24</sup> As long as Big Pharma insisted on extracting monopoly rents from even impoverished African AIDS victims, the cost of anti-retroviral treatments was thousands of dollars per patient per year. Once generic production and global political pressure managed to change the balance between monopoly rights and human rights, at least for this very special case, as much as 98 per cent of the cost of these essential medicines evaporated.<sup>25</sup>

The implications are political as well as economic and social. Hegemony depends on combining consent with coercion. Consent depends on the ability to portray the dominant order as serving universal goals. If the actual dynamics of the neo-liberal economy revolve around protecting monopoly rents from key productive assets by preventing their effective use, then Thomas Friedman’s<sup>26</sup> “lexus vs. olive tree” vision of global neo-liberalism as the most efficient vehicle of delivering improved global material well-being becomes implausible, consent correspondingly more difficult to sustain, and counter-hegemonic globalization more possible.

### *Governance Failures as Neo-liberalism’s Achilles’ Heel*

Economic underperformance is a symptom of the broader failure of neo-liberal governance. State apparatuses, the traditional vehicle of enforcing collective social agendas, have lost the ability to discipline private economic elites,

even in the sense of forcing them to face the discipline of real market competition. The logic of monopoly rents—this time focused on financial assets and returns from politically protected intangible assets rather than on politically protected monopoly rents from land ownership—dominate over “revolutionizing the means of production.” Expanding material possibilities (if not necessarily the common good) takes second place to accumulating rents. This inability to impose collective discipline on elites is exactly the weakness that Skocpol argues undermined eighteenth and nineteenth century national orders dominated by agrarian landholders,<sup>27</sup> allowing them to eventually be toppled either by more dynamic industrial capitalism or by revolutions.

Taking a global rather than a national perspective compounds the problem. The inability of the state to impose even a modicum of collective discipline on private economic elites at the national level (most crucially in the United States) undercuts productive dynamism, but even weaker governance institutions at the global level threaten the assets of what Robinson and Sklair would call the “transnational capitalist class.”<sup>28</sup>

The weakness of global governance is usually considered most dangerous in the realm of finance. As transnational financial managers and entrepreneurs have learned to take advantage of both the revolution in information technology and the new rules instituted in response to neo-liberal ideology, financial flows have expanded at multiples of the rate of expansion of global production and trade, and the frequency of international “financial crises” has expanded along with the magnitude of financial flows. The capacity of the global regulatory apparatus continues to fall behind. How close the world has come to replicating the financial destruction that led off the Great Depression is a matter of speculation, but at least some analysts saw close echoes in the Asian financial crises of 1997–98.<sup>29</sup>

Even the most ardent supporters of global neo-liberalism acknowledge the disjunction between the scope of the market and the scope of political authority. The roots of weak governance go beyond this. Genuine ideological conviction that regulation reduces efficiency, combined with short-sighted self-interest in being able to profit from the absence of governance, leaves neo-liberal elites incapable of constructing even the order that they need for their own long-term accumulation of capital.

The unwillingness of private sector elites to cede authority to governance structures over which they must share political control, even with other elites who happened to be grounded in disparate national apparatuses of power, exacerbates their inability to construct real global governance. This despite the fact that the more sophisticated members of the economic elite fully understand the need for a regime of global economic governance that can be counted on to defend the value of their financial assets and to avoid the kind of asset-destroying fiscal chaos that set things awry in the second third of the twentieth century.

When failure to provide social (and ecological) protection for ordinary citizens is combined with erecting political impediments to Smithian economic dynamism and failing to construct the governance necessary to protect the assets of capitalists themselves, widespread disillusionment with neo-liberal globalization is hardly mysterious. “Neo-liberalism Is Not an Alternative” (NINA) now seems a more reasonable proposition than TINA.

The question then becomes, “What sort of global regime will supplant the neo-liberal global order?” Will the successor be a more just and humane alternative globalization? Or is an even more inegalitarian, unjust, and ecologically unsustainable global regime a more plausible successor?

#### SHAPING A SUCCESSOR TO NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALIZATION

A process of counter-hegemonic globalization driven by a diverse, democratically organized movement to restore the protection of society and nature is hardly the most likely trajectory for producing a successor to the current neo-liberal order. Two other trajectories of change are already shaping the process of succession: the decline of the United States as global hegemon and the rise of what might be called, “regressive movements for social protection.” Looking at the potential impact of counter-hegemonic globalization in relation to a future created by the combination of these trends is a necessary complement to the analysis of gains in relation to neo-liberalism’s failures.

The ongoing shift in “hegemony” defined in terms of nation states is already changing the future of globalization. Many see the failures of the current neo-liberal order as rooted in the perverse behavior of the United States as a global hegemon. If this is true, then might shifting national hegemony offer a solution, perhaps even obviate the need for counter-hegemonic globalization?

At the same time that the balance of national power is shifting, there is, as Polanyi’s analysis would lead us to expect, a proliferation of what might be called “regressive movements for social protection.” Such movements see the solution to the magnification of risk and dislocation under neo-liberalism in terms of recapturing supposedly primordial values, re-installing supposedly “traditional” hierarchies, and forcibly excluding those who are outside the resulting definition of community. While more likely to focus on communities defined at the national level, these movements often have global ambitions and are definite competitors for the movements that promote the more inclusive and radically democratic agenda of counter-hegemonic globalization.<sup>30</sup>

The combination of these two trajectories could trump counter-hegemonic globalization. The decline of U.S. hegemony opens up positive possibilities, primarily because it is likely to expand the room for maneuver available to nation states in the Global South. Some, who share the basic agenda of counter-hegemonic globalization, see national state apparatuses of the global South as having the potential

to become more effective and reliable agents than transnational movements.<sup>31</sup> If they are right, perhaps counter-hegemonic globalization is a distraction from more important political battles.

Regressive movements for social protection, on the other hand, could undermine counter-hegemonic globalization by exerting a powerful pull on oppositional constituencies that might otherwise be attracted to progressive movements. They are also likely to trigger violently repressive responses from established authority, reducing the political space for democratic organizing, further undercutting possibilities for counter-hegemonic globalization. Their rise could be seen as a powerful reinforcement for structural pessimism.

### *Is American Decline a Solution?*

In a Polanyian vision, the axis of contestation is clear. If the unreflective expansion of the self-regulating market is unchecked, the resulting volatility, social distress, and turmoil will plunge the world into throes like those experienced in the first half of the twentieth century. My juxtaposition of neo-liberal globalization against counter-hegemonic globalization flows from this vision, but there are other ways of seeing the world.

For international relations experts, “hegemony” means something quite different from what it meant for Gramsci.<sup>32</sup> For them, “hegemony” refers to a situation in which a single powerful nation state dominates the international system of Westphalian states. The shape of the global order depends on how this “hegemonic” state defines its national interests and whether it is able to pursue those interests. In this view, an understanding of why the contemporary international order is dysfunctional must start with the role of the hegemon—the United States.

From a “Westphalian/realist” perspective, we do not live in a neo-liberal world at all. We live in a pseudo-liberal world where powerful nation states in general, and the United States in particular, pursue mercantilist and imperialist policies at the expense of both economic rationality and an equitable world order. This mercantile/imperialist regime uses global governance institutions to subordinate weaker nation states in the global South, preventing these states from pursuing developmental strategies that could foster the well-being of their citizens.

If the strategies and actions of nation states determine the character of the overall system, making the international order more “multilateral” by diminishing the power of the national hegemon relative to other nation states could constitute a solution to current woes.<sup>33</sup> The attraction of this view is obvious. It is hard to deny that “multilateralism” would be a great improvement over the irrational “unilateralism” that we live under at present. Expanding possibilities for democratic deliberation among nation states must obviously be one of the elements in any global expansion of democracy. Any decline in the inordinate power of the United States is particularly attractive from the point of view of the nations of the Global South.

Resuscitating the power of Southern states so that they will have the “policy space” to pursue “real” development is the key ingredient in this vision. Walden Bello states the case eloquently: “for us in the South, a significant weakening of the global hegemony of the United States, such as that which has occurred since 2003, is a giant step forward, for it gives our societies more breathing space, more freedom of maneuver.”<sup>34</sup> In this case, diminished power of the United States is linked with reining in existing global governance institutions, as in Bello’s arguments for “de-globalization.”<sup>35</sup> Insofar as “reining in” implies making global governance more genuinely democratic, there is strong overlap with the agenda of counter-hegemonic globalization. Beyond this, “bring back the nationalist developmental state” is a problematic rallying cry.

Unfortunately, return to “nationalist” projects does not deal with the fact that the predominance of private power over public institutions is as much a problem at the national level as it is at the global level. Private economic elites in the South may not be fully integrated into Robinson and Sklair’s “transnational capitalist class,”<sup>36</sup> but differences between their economic agenda and that of capital based in the North seem to be increasingly marginal and diminishing over time.

Local private economic elites in the South are for the most part quite happy to have their governments pursue neo-liberal policies while claiming that their “hands are tied” by externally imposed rules.<sup>37</sup> Lacking external cover, these elites would have to take more responsibility, but would, in all likelihood, choose the same policies. With support and pressure from local social movements (ideally reinforced by global allies), Southern states can become potentially important progressive actors, but it is hard to defend the proposition that “national bourgeoisies” and their political representatives will reform neo-liberal globalization.<sup>38</sup>

By exaggerating the extent to which regressive national policies in the Global South are the result of the imposition of global rules and policies (as opposed to the shared interests of local and global elites), the project of “resuscitating the nation state” distracts attention from the need for public institutions of global governance that are more powerful as well as more democratic. States in the South need global collective goods (like financial stability, genuine peacekeeping, and environmental stewardship) even more than those in the North. This requires strengthening and democratizing global governance. Eviscerating global governance institutions further will not solve the imbalance of power between public institutions and private elites.

Challenging the hegemony of the United States as a nation state is inevitably part of challenging neo-liberalism, or any quest for a more democratic international order. American hegemony magnifies the negative effects of neo-liberalism. But a “Westphalian fix” that shifts the relative distribution of power among nation states without addressing the growing predominance of private power is likely to leave the dysfunctions of neo-liberal globalization substantially intact.

The same caveat applies to the probable effects of shifting the national identity of the hegemon.

Would the replacement of one national hegemon (the United States) with another (China) allow the emergence of a “new world order” with a different set of basic priorities? Looking at the consequences of the shift of hegemony from England to the United States over the course of the twentieth century offers a cautionary tale for those who expect a change in the national identity of the hegemon to make a difference.

What difference did it make when an ex-colony with supposedly egalitarian and progressive values replaced the traditional European imperial powers at the top of the world order after World War II? The solidarity of the United States with colonies and ex-colonies was rhetorical at best. The United States was not only an enthusiastic promoter of the existing capitalist world order, but turned out to have a peculiar cultural affinity for the neo-liberal version. Hegemony in the Gramscian sense of the dominion of a particular set of socio-economic interests was preserved and intensified.

Currently, the ongoing replacement of the United States by China as the hegemon raises the same question again. Will a shift of hegemon from the United States to China transform the role of global markets and democratize global governance? Arrighi appears to hope that it might.<sup>39</sup> David Harvey,<sup>40</sup> who sees post-Dung Shao Ping China as a convert to global neo-liberalism, would emphatically disagree. The growing participation of export-oriented capital (foreign as well as local) in current political debates in China lends credence to the latter view, as do the burgeoning ties linking Chinese financial institutions to private finance capital in the West. Harvey underestimates China’s distinctiveness, but skepticism of China as an agent of a globally emancipatory politics or economics seems amply justified.

Chinese hegemony might be an improvement on the atavistic violence perpetrated by U.S. reliance on military force to preserve its failing hegemony, but China’s resolutely effective pursuit of national economic self-interest is unlikely to be a solution to the problems generated by neo-liberalism.<sup>41</sup> Even Arrighi, who offers a positive assessment of China’s historic role and current political dynamics, does not dismiss the possibility that something like a private capitalist class may have “succeeded in seizing control of the commanding heights of Chinese economy and society.”<sup>42</sup>

Realist theorists of international relations wouldn’t expect a shift in the identity of the hegemon defined in national terms to challenge hegemony defined in Gramsci’s socio-economic terms. Neither would Polanyi. In short, although U.S. dominion is a central feature of the current trajectory of neo-liberal globalization and responsible for some of its more perverse idiosyncrasies, displacing the United States is only one element in shifting from a system of global power driven by the intersection of private, profit-driven priorities operating



with the collaboration of state apparatuses, to a democratically-controlled, trajectory of global change. Diminishing disparities among nation states is a valuable agenda, but unless the behavior of nation states themselves is constrained, domestically and globally, by a more powerful “movement of movements,” they will remain primarily agents of elite interests.

Looking at the world from a more state-centric, Westphalian perspective does not obviate the need for counter-hegemonic globalization. A more multilateral world would be an improvement on U.S. hegemony, but increasing the power of other nation states is only likely to address the failures of neo-liberalism if it occurs in the presence of more powerful oppositional social movements.

### *Regressive Movements for Social Protection*

A plethora of “regressive movements for social protection” also play a role in shaping the successor to neo-liberal globalization.<sup>43</sup> Polanyi never assumed that the movements for social protection generated by the failure of the self-regulated market would necessarily take progressive forms. Given the centrality of Fascism in his early-twentieth-century landscape, he could hardly do so. Fascism epitomized “regressive movements” in Polanyi’s narrative, but neo-liberal globalization has helped stimulate a revitalized set of politically potent variations on giving unrestricted power to authoritarian machineries of power to escape from the negative consequences of the market.

“Actual existing social movements” do not sort themselves into dichotomous ideal types. Nonetheless, opposition to the hegemonic neo-liberal order includes social movements with agendas antithetical to the model of “counter-hegemonic globalization” as I have set it out. Ideal-typically, regressive movements for social protection make membership contingent on unquestioning adherence to the dictates of leaders, who claim monopoly rights to the interpretation of transcendental or traditional virtues. They are also movements that sanction remorseless de-valorization of others presumed to hold divergent values. They confront the arrogance of the neo-liberal order with their own version of certainty.

When both the material well-being promised by markets and the security supposedly delivered by the state seem beyond reach, such movements flourish. As Polanyi would predict, they are stimulated as much by cultural denigration as by material deprivation. Polanyi assumed that the destruction of supportive, validating cultural frameworks was more socially devastating than simple material deprivation.<sup>44</sup> It would make perfect sense to him that the pervasive global dominance of corporate cultural constructions built on the peculiar traditions of a few “out-lier” nations of the “West” would generate powerful oppositional movements.

The same processes that produce regressive social movements can also be an important source of progressive movements. Identities legitimated through connection to cultural heritages and shared experiences of ethnic oppression can

be powerful agents for constructing innovative institutional strategies, and the valorization of previously disparaged cultural identities is a positive project of counter-hegemonic globalization.<sup>45</sup>

Just as there is a symbiotic relationship between generic globalization and the emergence of counter-hegemonic globalization, there is a symbiotic relation between intensified efforts at suppressing opponents of the market and the growth of “regressive movements for social protection.” It is precisely their ability to feed off the same sorts of grievances that generate support for counter-hegemonic globalization that makes regressive movements competitors. Once powerful, they close down the political space for democratic deliberation and push the idea of social protection “through the looking glass” into a surreal world in which aggressive violence against even the weakest and most disprivileged ordinary citizens becomes legitimate, as long as it appears to disrupt the hegemony of the neo-liberal global order.

Regressive social movements can generate global networks, but a shared agenda, spanning regressive movements with different national origins, aimed at constructing a successor to neo-liberal globalization, is hard to imagine. The impact of these movements on the evolution of a successor global order seems more likely to take the form of moving neo-liberalism farther from its classical “liberal” political origins and stimulating the repressive side of national state strategies, both by moving states in which they have a political base in the direction of domestic repression and by legitimating repressive state strategies in the states that they threaten. Imagined in combination with an ungoverned global economy, especially in the financial sphere, the resulting global order could easily become a nightmare that would make neo-liberalism look retrospectively like an almost “golden age.” Unfortunately, clinging to neo-liberal globalization, even if it were politically possible, is unlikely to reduce the likelihood of such a nightmare. To the contrary, extending the life of neo-liberalism is probably the best way to provide political nourishment to regressive social movements.

Taking into account the role of regressive movements for social protection accentuates the importance of counter-hegemonic globalization. Unless progressive movements for social protection succeed in addressing the failures of neo-liberalism, regressive movements are likely to contribute to a downward spiral of repression and anti-democratic politics.

All of this makes more pressing the analytical agenda of assessing whether and how a trajectory of counter-hegemonic globalization might become plausible.

#### CONSTRUCTING COUNTER-HEGEMONIC GLOBALIZATION

What organizational and ideological hurdles have to be surmounted for a counter-hegemonic “movement of movements” to shape the global regime that succeeds neo-liberalism? What conditions would have to be met to foster the success

of a diverse, democratic, globally organized project of transformation aimed at maximizing democratic political control, the equitable development of human capabilities, and environment stewardship? What kinds of organization forms, ideological innovations, social alliances, and political strategies must be constructed to create a diverse, radically democratic, globally organized project of transformation aimed at maximizing democratic political control, the equitable development of human capabilities, and effective environmental stewardship?

No one knows the answers to these questions, but some rough analytical outlines of what might be required can be set out. Four general requisites would seem unavoidable if the assemblage of movements involved in the construction of counter-hegemonic globalization is to have a chance of success.

First, and most obviously, contemporary movements for social protection would have to meet the test that Polanyi's early-twentieth-century movements failed. They would have to effectively transcend not only national boundaries, but also the North-South divide.<sup>46</sup>

Second, contemporary transnational movements must be able to move beyond "organizational silos" devoted to single issues and particular constituencies, braiding together diverse constituencies without losing the capacity for focused political action. The importance of this requirement is a prime reason that Polanyi's perspective on movements for social protection is more attractive than traditional Marxist frameworks that privilege the role of a unitary "historical subject" defined in economic terms.<sup>47</sup>

Third, counter-hegemonic globalization must be capable of integrating different levels and scales of contestation. Combining local and global has unfortunately become a premature cliché before becoming a practical reality, but remains necessary nonetheless. Less often appreciated is the extent to which contestation focused at the level of the nation state continues to be essential to any process of global change.

Fourth, counter-hegemonic globalization must have the ability to communicate a project that captures the collective imagination. Absent an imaginary that projects "something radically better that is worth fighting for,"<sup>48</sup> even the most effective strategies of organization or alliance are unlikely to gain political purchase.

Each of these four requisites for success merits more detailed analytical elaboration. Looking at each in turn also offers an opportunity to adduce arguments as to whether current historical circumstances and movement practice make the possibility of surmounting these hurdles plausible.

### *Transcending Borders*

Barring descent into real global chaos, the shrinking of geographic space and the increased permeability of social and political boundaries associated with "generic globalization" are here to stay. If this is the case, then organizing at the

global level must be a key part of any transformative project. Just as nineteenth century social movements or twentieth century liberation movements had to organize at the level of the nation state to succeed,<sup>49</sup> twenty-first-century movements need to be able to operate at the scale to which rule-making and economic power have gravitated. Organizing at the national and local levels will continue to be important, in the same way that earlier social movements aimed at changing national policies needed grounding in local communities, but being organized globally has become a twenty-first-century necessity.<sup>50</sup>

If the project were purely negative—bringing down the established order without worrying about what would replace it—organization at the global level might not seem as important. “Barbarians at the gates” need not be organized at the same scale as an empire to bring it down. If the goal is reconstruction, then comparable scale becomes essential. If goods, information, people, and culture all flow in global networks, hoping to achieve equity or democratic control without an organization on a scale comparable to those networks would be quixotic.

At first, the idea of transcending the multiple boundaries that separate movements around the globe seems fanciful. A quick thought experiment suggests otherwise. A simple comparison of the difficulties involved in creating national movements in the nineteenth century to those involved in creating global movements in the twenty-first century offers intuitive support for the feasibility of transcending national boundaries. If we could measure the obstacles that stand in the way of activists in São Paulo, New Delhi, Seoul, or even Shenzhen communicating with each other or with their counterparts in Barcelona or Seattle, would these obstacles be greater than the difficulties of coordinating local movements in Durham, Carlisle, Bristol, and Norwich in nineteenth-century England? I would argue not. If the locals could coalesce into a national movement for social protection in the nineteenth century, why dismiss the ability of contemporary movements to “scale up” globally?

Tilly’s proposition<sup>51</sup> that the scale of social movements is limited by the scale of governance is also a good argument against transcending borders, but not a definitive one. If we compare the extent to which communities’ lives were shaped by rules formulated by national governments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the extent to which the lives of contemporary communities are shaped by rules generated at the global level, the institutions of twenty-first-century global governance look like a target at least as alluring as their nineteenth-century national counterparts.

As Lerner argues, the economic and political organization of neo-liberal globalization inadvertently facilitates building oppositional movements that transcend borders. Economically, the spread of transnational corporations gives workers across a wide range of countries shared targets. Politically, the imposition of common policy templates creates common ground for opposition. Targeting the organizational embodiments of global economic governance (e.g.,

the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the World Bank) offers continual opportunities to bring together movements with a panoply of national origins.

The possibility of transnational movements playing a role comparable to that of nationally organized social movements in the past cannot be rejected on theoretical or logical grounds. Empirically, the last thirty years offers a cornucopia of examples of movements operating effectively across national borders and, more important, across the North-South divide. The human rights movement best illustrates the role of transborder action.<sup>52</sup> Global organization has long been a feature of the environmental movement as well.<sup>53</sup>

The less obvious cases are even more telling. Peasants and small farmers are stereotypically parochial in their politics, yet their current transnational social movement organization, *Vía Campesina*, is aggressively and successfully global.<sup>54</sup> As Castells points out,<sup>55</sup> even movements committed to escaping the domination of modern universalisms end up using global networks and global ideologies. The facility with which the Zapatistas were able to use the communicative power of the Internet as part of their project of local autonomy is the standard case in point.<sup>56</sup>

The labor movement is the most interesting test case for structural arguments against the possibility of transcending national and regional borders, which is why I began with Lerner's vision of global labor. Anyone trying to prove the impossibility of transnational solidarity turns first to images of workers whipped by capital mobility and turned against each other by intensified cross-national competition.

This image is anachronistic. Most workers, both in the North and in the South, work in the service sector, which require the "product" to be delivered where they work (e.g., health, education, sales, and transportation). In these jobs, politically imposed impediments to local union organization are the principle obstacles to improved wages and working conditions, not competition from workers in other countries. For those who work in the public segment of the service sector, it is the global imposition of neo-liberal austerity that is the pervasive threat, not "foreign competition."

Even in the manufacturing sector, working inside globally integrated transnational production networks (instead of in "national" firms competing with "national" firms from other countries) gives workers an appreciation of the extent to which their fate is shaped by the same structure of power that dominates workers in other regions. Worldwide works councils provide an organizational infrastructure that brings together union leaders from North and South.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, efforts to create transnational institutions for the benefit of capital also help generate labor transnationalism. For example, recent trade agreements in the Western hemisphere (actual and potential) have moved labor from nationalist division to a shared regional stance.<sup>58</sup>

Clearly, current social movements transcend national boundaries and regional divides. They may not yet do so with sufficient density to threaten

neo-liberal globalization, but this organizational barrier seems unlikely to stand in the way of constructing counter-hegemonic globalization.

### *Braiding Together Diverse Constituencies*

One of Polanyi's central propositions was that because the utopian project of the self-regulating market threatens society as a whole, the project of social protection offers the potential of braiding together diverse constituencies. For the contemporary "movement of movements," the idea of diverse specific constituencies pursuing a shared set of general interests is not a taken-for-granted structural opportunity (which is essentially how Polanyi treats it in his analysis). It is a strategic goal and, even more important, a political principle fundamental to radical democratic aspirations.

Santos (this volume) argues that one of the definitive features of contemporary counter-hegemonic globalization is that it "rejects the concept of an historical subject and confers no priority on any specific social actor." Della Porta et al.<sup>59</sup> use surveys of participants in the global justice movement in Europe to make the same point. They find the "strong, totalizing exclusive identities" of traditional single constituency movements are being replaced by "multiple and layered" identities, which combine gender, race, generation, class, and religion and create a distinctively "multifaceted tolerant identity" among activists.

The conceptual challenge posed by this diversity-privileging mode of politics is, as Chandra Mohanty puts it, "to see . . . how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully."<sup>60</sup> The practical challenge is translating the combination of respect for difference and the quest for universal concerns into concrete organizational structures and political alliances.

In the simplest organizational terms, the braiding together of different individual constituencies continues to be a central feature of oppositional global politics. The labor movement and women's movements both draw on the discourse and strategies of the human rights movement. "Worker's rights as human rights" has become an important organizing theme in the labor movement.<sup>61</sup> The intersection of women's movements with the human rights movement has long been fundamental.<sup>62</sup> As the Cochabamba "water war" illustrates,<sup>63</sup> the intersection of community-based struggles and labor movement organization is more important than ever.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, the feminization of the labor force makes women the natural vanguard of any effort to expand of the labor movement, while simultaneously making the issues that women face as workers more central to the women's movement.

Even in cases of supposed general antagonism between movements, analysis of the logic of conflict often turns out to construct around atypical circumstances and to ignore cooperative counter-examples. For example, relations between the labor movement and environmental activists—so often portrayed as

conflictful in conventional media—actually appear quite promising when examined with more empirical care. “Teamsters and turtles” in Seattle in 1999 is the icon, but there are also examples of sustained Labor/environment coalitions, as in the Hemispheric Social Alliance or the current “Blue-Green Alliance,” which joins the Steelworkers and the Sierra Club.<sup>65</sup>

The complexities of simultaneously organizing a multiplicity of diverse constituencies manifest themselves most clearly in the World Social Forum (WSF).<sup>66</sup> Santos argues that “The WSF may be said to represent today, in organizational terms, the most consistent manifestation of counter-hegemonic globalization.”<sup>67</sup> Hardt and Negri would seem to agree.<sup>68</sup> Yet, Hardt’s characterization of the WSF as “unknowable, chaotic, and dispersive”<sup>69</sup> raises the question of whether the organizational requirements of sustaining the WSF’s current version of democratic diversity is consistent with the requirements of waging an effective political battle with the entrenched combination of states and corporations that sustains neo-liberal globalization. Some WSF veterans, like Walden Bello, have become skeptical.

This debate is part of a more general debate between those, like Castells,<sup>70</sup> who see networks as the unambiguously superior form of contemporary organization, and those, including the “traditional left,” who continue to value the capacities of the traditional “tree” structures that have characterized modern organizations from parties to armies to corporations. Hardt and Negri advocate a “non-hierarchical and non-centered network structure,”<sup>71</sup> which they call, following Deleuze and Guattari, a “rhizome.”<sup>72</sup> “Rhizomic” is an apt description for many of the ties among transnational social movements and among far flung local organizations within movements. Yet, both transnational social movements and local organizations also depend on coordination that branches out authoritatively from clearly defined decision-making centers. “Trees” may now be complemented more explicitly by “rhizomes,” but they have not been discarded.

The eventual organization of counter-hegemonic globalization will almost certainly combine “rhizomic” networks with traditional ‘trees.’ (Neo-liberalism is, after all, organized around a combination of “rhizomic” networks, binding together elite individuals at the top, in combination with the traditional trees that dominate both states and corporations, complimented by networks of corporate alliances and, increasingly, public-private networks as well.<sup>73</sup>) Arguably, finding the amalgam of “rhizomes” and “trees” that best preserves democratic diversity and braids together multiple constituencies, while building political fighting capacity, is an even more central challenge than transcending national and regional boundaries.

### *Institutionalizing Multi-level Contestation*

No movement could expect to generate a successor to neo-liberal globalization if it were organized only at the global level. Just as local mobilization was the heart of national success for Polanyian movements for social protection, both

local and national mobilizations are still where most of the action takes place in a globally organized movement of movements. As Tarrow has emphasized, transnational activists have always been “rooted cosmopolitans” whose efforts are grounded in local networks and experiences.<sup>74</sup> At the same time, global alliances have become an essential weapon in the repertoire of local activists.

The most important effects of social movements, both local and global, may be those that are mediated through national states. States continue to be crucial actors in shaping the global regime and the political pressures generated by social movements are crucial in shaping national responses to neo-liberal duress. For counter-hegemonic globalization to succeed, the complexities of multilevel contestation must be mastered, along with the challenges of transcending borders and combining democratic diversity with effective contestation of power.

The most immediate usefulness of global-local links may have less to do with changing global power structures than with giving over-matched disprivileged groups new leverage in local struggles.<sup>75</sup> Local elites often cling to the inequities that preserve their privilege with even more desperate inflexibility than their cosmopolitan counterparts. From backlands peasant activists like Chico Mendes in Brazil,<sup>76</sup> to victims of domestic violence in Guatemala,<sup>77</sup> struggles in which the local balance of power is hopelessly lopsided can gain new life by drawing on resources from outside the local arena.

Although oppressive local elites may sometimes operate mostly on their own behalf, intimate connections between local struggles and global power structures are more the rule. Privatization of local water systems offers a nice illustration.<sup>78</sup> Pressure for privatization at the local level originates in the interaction of Northern policy makers and corporate managers in global forums like the World Water Council. These pressures are then funneled through national governments anxious to attract Northern donors and private investment. The eventual consequences are felt locally.

Resistance to privatization also depends on a multilevel process. When privatization ends up sacrificing local water delivery to global profitability, as it often has, the result is local contestation. Until a local fight erupts, there is no role for transnational allies, but once it does, local actors are overmatched without transnational allies. Even more important, global alliances, which have included both global union federations and transnational NGOs, have been essential to counteracting the hegemony of arguments for water privatization at the global level.

The production networks created by transnational corporations offer another case in which global power structures and local oppression are intimately connected, generating global-local activist networks in response. Campaigns joining local militancy in the South with a global web of activist networks have become a staple in fights for workers' rights in labor-intensive manufacturing industries.



In an elegantly thorough dissection of one iconic example, Hermanson sets out a process in which rebellious apparel workers in Puebla, Mexico, were hopelessly over-matched by an “unholy alliance” of the local political structure, corrupt local union officials, and the relentless owners of the sub-contracting assembly plant.<sup>79</sup> The construction of a global network of NGOs and labor movement organizations, including trade union organizations in Korea (the sub-contractor’s home base), Mexican labor NGOs, students on U.S. campuses, and U.S. politicians linked to the AFL-CIO was able to turn the tide. The construction of such networks is still the exception rather than the rule,<sup>80</sup> but efforts to transform transborder alliances from a series of campaigns into a set of durable institutions are underway.<sup>81</sup> Should these efforts succeed, it would be an important step in the direction of a set of transnational labor networks that could be called “counter-hegemonic globalization.”

The analysis of global-local alliances is complicated by the tendency to use “global” to refer to networks or organizations based in the North, while the “local” is situated in the South,<sup>82</sup> raising the specter that transnational social movements replicate the same North-South asymmetries as the dominant regime (even if only in the realm of culture and ideology). The danger is real and points to the importance of expanding the South-South dimension of transnational alliances, as well as the necessity of persistent, critical self-reflection on the part of both privileged Northern activists and their allies in the South.<sup>83</sup>

Gauging the pitfalls of global networks depends on assessing whether differences between the interests of movements in the North and those in the South supersede common interests created by neo-liberal globalization. In specific instances, they may. The vastly disparate economic, social, and political conditions facing Northern and Southern activists generate differences in priorities that shouldn’t be papered over. For example, Northern conservationists and Southern peasants in search of sustainable livelihoods are likely to have conflicting definitions of environmental stewardship. In other cases, supposed conflicts seem to be more the product of the detached analyst’s casuistic skills than genuine difference of interest.

Whether North-South networks are likely to undermine the ability of local movements in the South to pursue their “authentic” goals, as Clifford Bob argues,<sup>84</sup> also depends on the malleability of Southern movements. It is possible that local activists in the South willing to risk their lives by standing up against lethal local adversaries would then turn around and betray their own interests in return for the prospect of a grant from the Ford Foundation, but it is certainly debatable.<sup>85</sup>

An equally plausible case can be made for the reverse process of re-shaping agendas—one in which local innovations originating in the South become the orienting ideas in global networks. This process goes beyond idealizing the theory and practices of heroic local movements like the Zapatistas.<sup>86</sup> Local practical innovations in the South are also models for the reconstruction of social

protection in the North. Participatory budgeting, which was nurtured, like the World Social Forum, by a deeply rooted, local political activism in Porto Alegre, has become a model of “empowered participatory governance” in the North.<sup>87</sup> In a very different vein, “truth and reconciliation commissions,” having circulated through a variety of local experiments in the South, have become a transnational model for efforts to bridge deep-seated conflicts. The assumption that global-local flows must inevitably involve the subversion of the South-based “local” by the North-based “global,” misses some of the most interesting dynamics of counter-hegemonic globalization.

Debates over how best to combine local and global struggles continue to evolve. The question of how to integrate both with contestation centered on the apparatuses of the nation state is more vexed. As has already been discussed, some, like Hardt and Negri, have essentially given up on the nation state, assuming that even rich states are no longer independent actors, and no state apparatus should be considered as a potential ally.<sup>88</sup> Others, like Bello,<sup>89</sup> continue to look on powerful Northern states as important threats and the poor states of the South as potentially progressive actors. Stressing multi-level contestation produces yet another optic on the actual and potential role of states as actors in the current global regime.

States are both enemies and allies of progressive movements. Countering the internal repressive capacity of states, especially in the South, has been one of the ways in which transnational movements have provided key support for local activists. The symbiotic interaction between local struggles for human rights and catalytic transnational initiatives (e.g., the attempted prosecution of Pinochet) offers the most obvious illustration.<sup>90</sup> At the same time, state managers can be key allies for local social movements in their struggles against global economic elites, as in the case of national efforts to fight against the monopoly rents of Big Pharma discussed by Klug.<sup>91</sup> Both cases point to the necessity of continuing to include states as actors in any analysis of counter-hegemonic globalization.

As the discussion of “Westphalian-based” visions of post-neo-liberal trajectories has already suggested, it is analytically untenable to either discount the persistently powerful role of the political (and military) apparatuses of the nation states. Unfortunately, it is equally untenable to rely on national political apparatuses (in either the North or the South) to act progressively in the absence of constraints from transnational as well as local social movements.

For national political elites anxious to argue that regressive policies are dictated by the fact that their “hands are tied” by the global neo-liberal regime, the supposed “eclipse of the state” is an invaluable political gift.<sup>92</sup> The elites that command state apparatuses, even in the poorest countries of the Global South, are also likely to be material beneficiaries of the global neo-liberal regime. At the same time, failure to exploit the differences of interest between poor states in the South and rich ones in the North would be strategically inexcusable.

The persistence of even a semblance of Westphalian (one state, one vote) international norms creates the possibility of alliances between transnational social movements and smaller, poorer nation states. Both Seattle in 1999 and Cancun in 2003 illustrate this. Whether smaller, poorer states are available for such alliances, or become instead, conveyor belts, taking global neo-liberal rules and imposing them domestically, depends on the power of oppositional movements within those states.

Multi-level contestation can create “virtuous circles” of change across levels. If symbiotic relations between transnational and domestic movements strengthen domestic movements, increasing their leverage in national political processes, this symbiosis also contributes to more progressive national political action at the global level. More progressive state actors provide transnational movements with potential national allies at the global level, strengthening these transnational movements and enhancing their ability to act as allies for domestic movements.

Sustaining a “virtuous circle” of multi-level contestation, like braiding together the interests and strategies of diverse constituencies, is not simply an organizational challenge. It also depends on constructing an ideological framework that can stand up against multiple levels of competing ideology: global neo-liberal frameworks, traditional nationalisms, and local varieties of regressive ideological substitutes for social protection.

### *Capturing the Collective Imagination*

For any oppositional group that lacks conventional power resources, organizational success depends on ideological success. An imaginary that can capture the dreams and spark the energies of ordinary citizens is the sine qua non of building oppositional power. The first task of counter-hegemony is to propose a vision of the future that connects to peoples’ own definition of the lives they want to live.

Each dimension of neo-liberalism’s failure offers opportunities for building an ideological case. Shifting risks from vulnerable individuals and families back onto to the large-scale institutions capable of bearing them is a clear goal. Delivering collective goods, with environmental stewardship at the top of the list, is another obvious component of a counter-hegemonic vision. Opening access to currently monopolized ideas and other easily shared intangible assets, enabling people to make the most of their capabilities, is a third. Democratic governance on a scale commensurate with the current global scope of private production and exchange is perhaps the most compelling of all.

Neo-liberalism’s rhetorical enthronement of democracy as the only legitimate form of political decision-making creates an unparalleled ideological opportunity for global social movements. At the national level, representational rules and processes can be manipulated to reduce “democracy” to a set of innocuous electoral transitions. At the global level, the façade fails. By making

the necessity of global governance more obvious, neo-liberal globalization makes its inability to construct democratic institutions at the global level more obvious. From the IMF's embarrassing "democratic deficit" to the difficulties of manipulating the "one nation one vote" system at the World Trade Organization (WTO), to the blatant anti-democratic trumping of domestic democracy by trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), there is hardly a pretense of democracy beyond the level of the nation state.<sup>93</sup>

Yet, global neo-liberalism does not have the option of abandoning the pretense of democracy completely. Elites need to protect themselves from each other, especially at the global level. Enforcing rule bound governance is the least costly and most dependable way to do it. Democratic procedures, even if they complicate denying non-elites claims (whether from poor nations or social movements) and increase ideological vulnerability, are less costly than Hobbesian anarchy. Overtly abandoning democracy would open a Pandora's Box filled with the potential for elite conflict.

Insistent claims for genuine democracy at all levels are an ideological trump card. Recently, Amartya Sen's "capability approach"<sup>94</sup> has provided a new analytical path connecting democratic demands to issues of economic allocation and social protection. In Sen's view, "thickly democratic" decision-making institutions built on public discussion, and exchange of ideas, information, and opinions offer the *only* way to adequately define desirable economic goals. Democracy thus becomes an essential part of any legitimate economic program as well as a means of realizing political aspirations.

Capturing the collective imagination requires more than a vision of "something radically better worth fighting for." It also requires a plausible case that such a vision is attainable. Can the movement of movements construct a credible brief as to why an edifice that concentrates both economic power and control over the means of violence as thoroughly as the current neo-liberal order does would ever succumb to a set of movements whose economic resources are minimal in comparison and whose control over the means of violence is practically nil?

The simple foundation of an answer starts from the fact that empires have always fallen and there is no reason to expect this one to be any different. The analyses of the tribulations of neo-liberal globalization that have already been discussed reinforce this point. We also know that without consent, coercion becomes unsustainable. If organization from below can change the distribution of beliefs and produce "normative cascades"<sup>95</sup> that undercut consent, the means of coercion become insecure as well.

The fall of the Soviet apparatus of domination, which took even the most sophisticated analysts by surprise, provided a nice demonstration of this principle. Standard organizers' discourse, which always emphasizes the idea that once a sufficient number of the oppressed express their refusal to carry on the momentum will become unstoppable, follows a logic quite close to academic

analysis of “normative cascades.” The “movement of movements” should be able to take advantage of this well-trod ideological path.

Bringing down an empire does not necessarily imply the capacity to build a more desirable alternative institutional architecture, as the sad case of post-Soviet Russia illustrates. Nonetheless, if counter-hegemonic movements can provoke a cascade of de-legitimation, sustain diversity and democracy in the process of oppositional campaigns, and gain practical experience through the control of local governance institutions, they will have a credible basis for constructing an alternative institutional architecture.

Skepticism from another direction must also be overcome. For some skeptics, the fear will not be that constructing an alternative institutional architecture is impossible, but that likely constructions will not be “worth fighting for.” In this vision, “counter-hegemonic globalization” is really just an adjunct to neo-liberal globalization, extending the life of capitalist domination by making it more humane. There may be no simple ideological response to such a critique. Claims to purity and steadfastness are unlikely to hold weight in themselves. Practice is the only real response. Nonetheless, if the movement of movements continues to take its own goals seriously, the result would be anything but marginal.

A democratically controlled political economy in which markets are embedded in society rather than dominating society is a radical goal. Maximizing democratic political control and prioritizing equitable development of human capabilities and environmental stewardship is not compatible with capitalism as we know it, even a version of capitalism willing to move in the direction of “embedded liberalism.” If human rights, labor, women’s, environmental, and other transnational social movements were to come anywhere close to achieving their combined ends, it would be “another world.”

#### CONCLUSION

This catalog of requisites for the construction of counter-hegemonic globalization is not a recipe for easy optimism. Organizing global-local alliances that do not replicate the power asymmetries of the current world order, forging collective agendas among a multiplicity of diverse constituencies, and generating a collective imaginary that will be viewed by the world’s ordinary citizens as “something radically better that is worth fighting for” is not an agenda for the easily daunted.

Given the complexities of organizing a progressive counter-hegemonic globalization, other less emancipatory trajectories for replacing neo-liberalism can easily appear more plausible. But calculating the odds of failure should not be allowed to obscure the logic of conditional optimism. None of the complications that have been introduced erase the basic premises on which neo-Polanyian optimism is grounded. Futures are multiple, and multiplicity creates opportunity

for agency. Every system of domination generates its own distinctive set of opportunities for challenge and transformation, and neo-liberal globalization is no exception.

There are manifold opportunities to be seized. In structural terms, seizing the opportunities means using the tools created by generic globalization to transcend borders, using the intersections in the agendas of the full array of disprivileged constituencies to braid together a diversely democratic amalgam that combines bureaucratic “trees” and anarchically-networked “rhizomes,” and continually leveraging strengths achieved at one political scale (whether local, national- or global) to undermine domination built on structures of a different scale. Ideologically, neo-liberal globalization creates two kinds of opportunity. It imposes unbearable risks on communities and families while refusing compensatory social protection, and it enthrones the normative value of democracy while being completely unwilling and incapable of implementing genuine democratic rule, most blatantly at the global level.

Laid out as abstractions, the prerequisites for being able to seize these opportunities look stringent, but movements, both local and transnational, have long been building the experience necessary to address them. By intersecting across boundaries and levels, connecting issues and constituencies and generating innovative discourses of transformation, they are developing practice that responds to the challenges. The structure and ideology of the “actually existing movement of movements” is creating a new basis for belief in a globally organized project of transformation that maximizes democratic political control and turns the equitable development of human capabilities and environmental stewardship into the most urgent priorities.

#### NOTES

1. Steve Lerner, “Global Unions: A Solution to Labor’s Worldwide Decline,” *New Labor Forum* 16, no. 1 (2007): 23–37. See also Steve Lerner, “Global Corporations, Global Unions,” *Contexts* 6, no. 3 (2007): 16–22.

2. Lerner, “Global Unions: A Solution to Labor’s Worldwide Decline,” 17.

3. The literature on transnational social movements that might be considered contributors to counter-hegemonic globalization is now broad and well-developed. Prominent examples would include Kate Bronfenbrenner, *Global Unions: Challenging Transnational Capital through Cross-Border Campaigns* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); Christopher Chase-Dunn et al., “The Contours of Solidarity and Division among Global Movements,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* (Forthcoming); Donatella della Porta et al., *Globalization from Below: Transnational Activists and Protest Networks* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); William Fisher and Thomas Ponniah, eds., *Another World Is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum* (London: Zed, 2003); Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Sanjeev Khagram et al., eds., *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms* (Minneapolis,

MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Tom Mertes, *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* (London: Verso, 2004); Jackie Smith, *Social Movements for Global Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Jackie Smith et al., eds., *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997); and Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). My own efforts to add to this literature include, among others, Peter Evans, "Fighting Marginalization with Transnational Networks: Counter-Hegemonic Globalization," *Contemporary Sociology* 29, no. 1 (2000): 230–41; Evans, "Development as Institutional Change: The Pitfalls of Monocropping and the Potentials of Deliberation," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38, no. 4 (2004): 30–52; and Evans, "Counterhegemonic Globalization: Transnational Social Movements in the Contemporary Global Political Economy," in *Handbook of Political Sociology*, ed. T. Janoski, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

4. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon, 2001 [1944]).

5. Ibid. For discussion of Polanyi's approach, see among others Fred Block, "Karl Polanyi and the Writing of the *Great Transformation*," *Theory and Society* 32, no. 3 (2003): 275–306; Fred Block and Margaret Somers, "Beyond the Economic Fallacy: The Holistic Social Science of Karl Polanyi," in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, ed. T. Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Michael Burawoy, "For a Sociological Marxism: The Complementary Convergence of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi," *Politics & Society* 31, no. 2 (2003): 193–261.

6. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 138.

7. Ibid., 163. In a rant that sounds much like contemporary diatribes against neoliberalism, Polanyi sums up these ravages as entailing "the destruction of family life, the devastation of neighborhoods, the denudation of forests, the pollution of rivers . . . and the general degradation of existence including housing and the arts, as well as the innumerable forms of private and public life that do not affect profits." See Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 139.

8. John Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order," *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (1982): 379–415.

9. John Ruggie, "At Home Abroad, Abroad at Home: International Stability in the New World Economy," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 24, no. 3 (1994): 507–26.

10. Articulating this view most fluently is Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000).

11. The best elaborated version of an approach, which starts from envisaging alternative institutional structures and then moves to the analysis of processes of change, is Erik Olin Wright's "Envisaging Real Utopians" project. See <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/ERU.htm>, and also Erik Olin Wright, "Compass Points: Towards a Socialist Alternative," *New Left Review* 41 (2006): 93–124.

12. See, for example, George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge, 2004); and Ritzer, *The Globalization of Nothing* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge, 2007).

13. Examples are Walden Bello, *Deglobalization: New Ideas for Running the World Economy* (London: Zed, 2002); Bello, "Globalization in Retreat: Capitalist Overstretch, Civil Society and the Crisis of the Globalist Project," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 51

(2007): 209–20; Martin Khor, “Globalization and the South: Some Critical Issues” (paper presented at the UNCTAD “South Summit,” Havana, 2000); and Khor, “The WTO’s Doha Negotiations and Impasse: A Development Perspective,” *Third World Network Online* at <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/par/The.WTOs.Doha.Negotiations.doc> (2006).

14. For example, Giovanni Arrighi et al., *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Arrighi et al., “Industrial Convergence and the Persistence of the North-South Divide,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38, no. 1 (2003): 3–31; and David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

15. John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (London: Granta, 1998).

16. George Soros, “The Capitalist Threat,” *Atlantic Monthly* 279 (1997): 2.

17. Allan Meltzer, *Report of the International Financial Institutions Advisory Commission* (Washington, DC: United States Congress, 2000); Dani Rodrik, *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1997); and Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002).

18. See Jacob S. Hacker, *The Great Risk Shift: The Assault on American Jobs, Families, Health Care, and Retirement—and How You Can Fight Back* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

19. Amy Chua, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

20. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 3.

21. Fred Block, “Swimming against the Current: The Partial Construction of a U.S. Developmental State,” *Politics & Society* (this issue).

22. James Boyle, “The Second Enclosure Movement and the Construction of the Public Domain,” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 66, no. 1-2 (2003): 33–74.

23. The idea that granting a long-term monopoly is the best way to promote innovation is hard to justify using “free market” theories. For an interesting historical discussion of the politics required for the international imposition of the idea, see Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective* (London: Anthem Press, 2002). Traditional arguments that current schemes for granting monopoly rights are in the service of accelerating innovation find remarkably little support in analyses of sectors like pharmaceuticals; see Marcia Angell, *The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What to Do About It* (New York: Random House, 2004). Conversely, arguments for the benefits of non-exclusionary property rights over productive knowledge have been able to find compelling support in the evolution of open-source software; see Steven Weber, *The Success of Open Source* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). See also Evans, “Development as Institutional Change.”

24. Heinz Klug, “Law, Politics, and Access to Essential Medicines in Developing Countries,” *Politics & Society* (this issue).

25. McNeil summarized the evolution of costs from 2000 to 2007 as follows: “Triple therapy cost \$12,000 a year per patient. Cipla Ltd., the Indian generic-drug maker, had not yet offered to supply the drugs for \$350, which set prices tumbling; they are now \$150.” (Donald McNeil, “A Time to Rethink Aids’s Grip,” *New York Times*, November 25, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/25/weekinreview/25mcneil.html>).

26. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*.



27. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

28. William Robinson, *A Theory of Global Capitalism: Production, Class, and State in a Transnational World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); and Leslie Sklair, *The Transnational Capitalist Class* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2001).

29. See Jan Kregel, "Yes, 'It' Did Happen Again—a Minsky Crisis Happened in Asia," *Levy Economics Institute Working Paper* (1998).

30. Al Qaeda and its allies have become the empirical archetype of "regressive movements for social protection" in the popular imagination; see Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). But there is a wide range of contemporary examples; cf. Peter Waldmann, "Ethnic and Sociorevolutionary Terrorism: A Comparison of Structures," in *Social Movements and Violence: Participation in Underground Organisations*, ed. D. della Porta (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1992). For a useful discussion of "fundamentalisms" in the Middle East and the United States, see also Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, Second ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

31. See the discussion of "multi-level contestation" below.

32. See Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

33. For the radical antithesis of this position, see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). For them, the nation state has become contemptibly anachronistic.

34. Bello, "Globalization in Retreat," 209.

35. Bello, *Deglobalization*.

36. See Robinson, *A Theory of Global Capitalism*; Leslie Sklair, *Sociology of the Global System* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Sklair, *The Transnational Capitalist Class*; and Sklair, *Globalization: Capitalism and Its Alternatives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). The idea of a politically hegemonic, globally integrated transnational capitalist class stands in opposition to the full range of state-centric analyses. If state-centric views tend to ignore the degree to which private economic interests are organized to transcend national boundaries, the "transnational capitalist class" perspective underestimates the continuing importance of national politics both as an ideological vector and as a vehicle for the particular interests.

37. Transposing this view to the North and assuming that neo-liberal policies in the North are primarily due to the restrictions imposed by global governance institutions is an even harder position to defend, at least in the case of major powers like the United States. To caricature only slightly, U.S. corporations write the rules, which are then imposed by the U.S. government on global institutions, and then negative welfare outcomes of neo-liberalism within the United States are conveniently blamed on the global "other."

38. Even when the state apparatus achieves exceptional "relative autonomy" as currently epitomized by the oil-based exceptionalism of Chávez's Venezuela, individual nation states can be effective instruments for promoting counter-hegemonic globalization only insofar as they can become effectively connected to broader transnational strategies (as Chávez himself appears to recognize).

39. See Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London: Verso, 1994); and Arrighi et al., *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*. The biggest danger in this perspective is that U.S. resistance to the shift of hegemony might unleash a catastrophic military confrontation.

40. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

41. One can imagine China trying to dislodge the current monopoly of Northern corporations over global intangible assets, but it is more plausible to project continuation of recent efforts at the construction of strategic alliances between Chinese capital and currently dominant transnational corporations.

42. Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing: The Lineages of the 21st Century* (London: Verso, 2007), 369.

43. In Castells's terminology, these are "reactive movements" aimed at defensive reconstruction, rather than "proactive movements" with a transformative project aimed at constructing a new system of social relations (Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 2.)

44. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 160.

45. A good example is the analysis of Latin American movements built around indigenous identities in Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "The World Social Forum and the Future of the Global Left," *Politics & Society* (this issue).

46. Polanyi was sharply critical of the socially destructive effects of colonial rule, but did not envisage the possibility that movements of social protection based in the developed countries might eventually join forces with the movements engendered by struggles against colonial domination.

47. This is not to say that a Polanyian vision cannot be integrated with a Marxist one. While I have chosen to focus on the contribution of Polanyi here, it is worth noting that others have made good arguments for combining a Polanyian frame with a Gramscian one—e.g., Vicki Birchfield, "Contesting the Hegemony of Market Ideology: Gramsci's 'Good Sense' and Polanyi's 'Double Movement,'" *Review of International Political Economy* 6, no. 1 (1999): 27–54; and Burawoy, "For a Sociological Marxism."

48. Santos, "The World Social Forum and the Future of the Global Left," Footnote 5.

49. Cf. Charles Tilly, "Globalization Threatens Labor's Rights," *International Labor and Working Class History* 47 (1995): 1–23.

50. It is important to underline that local organizing is not just an auxiliary to global organizing. The principal of subsidiarity applies to both movements and governments. While addressing some issues is contingent on global scope, other grievances are best addressed locally or regional.

51. Tilly, "Globalization Threatens Labor's Rights."

52. See Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; and Stephen Ropp et al., eds., *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a critical view of the globalization of the human rights movement, see David Kennedy, *The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

53. See Peter Newell, *Climate for Change: Non-State Actors and the Global Politics of the Greenhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Simone Pulver, "Making Sense of Corporate Environmentalism: An Environmental Contestation Approach to Analyzing the Causes and Consequences of the Climate Change Policy Split in the Oil Industry," *Organization & Environment* 20, no. 1 (2007): 44–83; and Paul Wapner, "Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civil Politics," *World Politics* 47, no. 3 (1995): 311–40.

54. Saturnino Borrás, *La Vía Campesina: An Evolving Transnational Social Movement* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Transnational Institute, 2004); and José Bové, "A Farmers' International?" *New Left Review* 12 (2001): 89–101.

55. Castells, *The Power of Identity*.

56. See also Markus Schulz, "Collective Action across Borders: Opportunity Structures, Network Capacities, and Communicative Praxis in the Age of Advanced Globalization," *Sociological Perspectives* 41, no. 3 (1998): 587–616.

57. Cf. Mark Anner and Peter Evans, "Building Bridges across a Double Divide: Alliances between U.S. and Latin American Labour and NGOs," *Development in Practice* 14, no. 1-2 (2004): 34–47.

58. For example, Mark Herkenrath, "Social Movements and the Challenges of Transnational Coalition-Building: A Case Study on the Hemispheric Social Alliance and the Pan-American Campaign against the Ftaa" (paper presented at the 16th World Congress of the International Sociological Association, Durban, South Africa, 2006); and Tamara Kay, "Labor Transnationalism and Global Governance: The Impact of NAFTA on Transnational Labor Relationships in North America," *American Journal of Sociology* 111, no. 3 (2005): 715–56.

59. della Porta et al., *Globalization from Below*, 241.

60. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 226.

61. For an analysis of the limits of this particular fusion, see Gay Seidman, *Beyond the Boycott: Labor Rights, Human Rights, and Transnational Activism* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007).

62. See Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; and Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Merry, "Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle," *American Anthropologist* 108, no. 1 (2006): 38–51.

63. See Oscar Olivera, *Cochabamba: Water War in Bolivia* (Boston: South End Press, 2004).

64. Clawson, among others, makes an analogous case for the "fusion" of the labor movement and community-based social movements in the United States; see Dan Clawson, *The Next Upsurge: Labor and the New Social Movements* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

65. See Brian Obach, *Labor and the Environmental Movement: The Quest for Common Ground* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004). For a description of the current alliance between the Steel Workers and the Sierra Club, also see <http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/> and David Foster, "Steel Magnolias: Labor Allies with the Environmental Movement," *New Labor Forum* 16, no. 1 (2007): 59–67.

66. Among the many efforts to capture the diversity of the World Social Forum, one of the best collections is Fisher and Ponniah, eds., *Another World Is Possible*.

67. Santos, "The World Social Forum and the Future of the Global Left."

68. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*.

69. Michael Hardt, "Porto Alegre: Today's Bandung?" *New Left Review* 14 (2002): 112–18, 118.

70. Castells, *The Power of Identity*.

71. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 299.

72. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). Deleuze and Guattari are not easy to parse, but the concrete reference to plants that spread by sending out shoots and roots from nodes in networks of underground stems is an apt description of the way in which many activists believe transnational movements should be organized.

73. On the rise of “inter-governmental networks” as a response to the weakness of neo-liberal governance at global level, see Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A New World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

74. Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, 46–47.

75. This is the goal of the “boomerang model” of transnational activism (Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*), or “externalization” in the terminology of Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, 146.

76. See Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*.

77. See Merry, “Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism.”

78. See Belén Balanyá et al., eds., *Reclaiming Public Water: Achievements, Struggles, and Visions from around the World* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Transnational Institute and Corporate Europe Observatory, 2005); David Hall and Emanuele Lobina, “Private and Public Interests in Water and Energy,” *Natural Resources Forum* 28, no. 4 (2004): 268–77; and Olivera, *Cochabamba*.

79. Jeff Hermanson, “Global Corporations, Global Campaigns: The Struggle for Justice at Kukdong International in Mexico” (Washington, DC: American Center for Labor Solidarity, 2004).

80. For more general discussions of transnational labor campaigns, see Anner and Evans, “Building Bridges across a Double Divide”; César Rodríguez-Garavito, “Global Governance and Labor Rights: Codes of Conduct and Anti-Sweatshop Struggles in Global Apparel Factories in Mexico and Guatemala,” *Politics & Society* 33, no. 2 (2005): 203–333; and Heather Williams, “Mobile Capital and Transborder Labor Rights Mobilization,” *Politics & Society* 27, no. 1 (1999): 139–66.

81. One of the most interesting of these institutionalizing efforts is the “designated suppliers program” currently being promoted by the Worker’s Rights Consortium. See <http://www.workersrights.org/dsp.asp>.

82. Cases can also, of course, be found in which local militancy in the North has been the beneficiary of global networks in which key leverage is applied in the South. For example, in the recent lockout at Whitby Gerdau Ameristeel plant in Beaumont, Texas, building a network that coordinated pressure by Brazilian metalworkers against the Brazilian parent company was a crucial element in the campaign. See <http://www.usw.ca/program/content/3030.php>.

83. Paying attention to Santos’s admonishing refrain “no global social justice without global cognitive justice” is an important element in such vigilance.

84. Clifford Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

85. Bob’s claims in *The Marketing of Rebellion* about the nefarious consequences of the Zapatistas’ international alliances represents one side of the debate. For a somewhat uncritical counterpoint on the same case, see Thomas Olesen, “Globalising the Zapatistas: From Third World Solidarity to Global Solidarity?” *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 255–67. And for a nicely balanced empirical analysis of tensions generated by North-South alliances in the women’s movement, see Millie Thayer, “Negotiating the Global: Rural Brazilian Women and Transnational Feminisms,” in *Rethinking Feminisms in the Americas*, ed. D. Castillo (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Thayer, “Traveling Feminisms: From Embodied Women to Gendered Citizenship,” in *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*, ed. M. Burawoy (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); and Thayer, “Transnational Feminism: Reading Joan Scott in the Brazilian *Sertão*,” *Ethnography* 2, no. 2 (2001): 243–71.

86. For examples of the iconic role of the Zapatistas for certain strands of activists in Europe, see della Porta et al., *Globalization from Below*, 41, 53.

87. See <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org/> and also Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, eds., *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance* (London: Verso, 2003).

88. Starting from the premise that national sovereignty is the “poisoned gift” to the former colonies of the Global South, Hardt and Negri go on to suggest that trying to use the nation-state as a weapon against neo-liberalism is politically counterproductive; Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 132. See also Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed, 1986); Hardt, “Porto Alegre”; and Mertes, *A Movement of Movements*.

89. Bello, “Globalization in Retreat.”

90. The recent work of Sikkink on human rights in Latin America makes this argument with great lucidity; Kathryn Sikkink, *From State Responsibility to Individual Criminal Accountability: A New Regulatory Model for Core Human Rights Violations* (Oxford, UK: Global Governance Project, University College, Oxford University, 2007).

91. Klug, “Law, Politics, and Access to Essential Medicines in Developing Countries.”

92. Cf. Peter Evans, “The Eclipse of the State?: Reflections on Stateness in an Era of Globalization,” *World Politics* 50, no. 1 (1997): 62–87.

93. The United Nations (UN) system is the exception that proves the rule. For a discussion of contradictory potential of the UN system as a focus for the democratic demands of global social movements, see Smith, *Social Movements for Global Democracy*.

94. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999).

95. On this concept, see Timur Kuran, “Sparks and Prairie Fires: A Theory of Unanticipated Political Revolution,” *Public Choice* 61, no. 1 (1989): 41–74; and Timur Kuran and Cass Sunstein, “Availability Cascades and Risk Regulation,” *Stanford Law Review* 51 (1999): 683–768. Also see Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 897–917.

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