

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Thesis submitted to the
Institute of Social sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Political Science and
Public Administration

by

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February 2010

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ABSTRACT

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February 2010, pages

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

The aim of this thesis is to explore the stance and effects of World Social Forum and World Economic Forum in a comparative manner in terms of globalization.

Proliferation of technological advancements lead to the demographical increase and the emergence of global threatening challenges in the world. As a matter of fact human beings, who are disposed to those global issues, start to react in different ways in which the most remarkable one is the social movements. However, these social movements which have diverse identities and ideologies should act and obviate to these problems instead of production of rhetoric. World Economic Forum and World Social Forum emerged to find solutions to global troubles.

Key Words: World Economic Forum, World Social Forum, Globalization

ÖZET

Yıldırım, Abdullah

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Ali Murat Yel

Şubat 2010, sayfa

DÜNYA EKONOMİK FORUMUNA ALTERNATİF OLARAK DÜNYA SOSYAL FORUMU

Bu yüksek lisans tezi, Dünya Sosyal Forumu ve Dünya Ekonomik Forumları karşılaştırmak ve forumların küreselleşme çerçevesinde etkilerini incelemektedir.

Giderek artan teknolojik gelişmeler , Dünya nüfusunun artması ve kontrolsüz güçlerin elde edilmesiyle tüm Dünya'yı tehdit eden global sorunlar ortaya çıkmıştır. Doğal olarakta global sorunlardan etkilenmeye başlayan insanoğlu farklı şekillerde tepkiler ortaya koymaya başlamıştır. Bunların en önemlisi sosyal hareketlerdir. Fakat çok farklı kimlikte ve düşünceye sahip olan sosyal hareketlerin bu sorunlara çare bulması yani konuşmaların etkinliğe dökülmesini gerektirmektedir. Dünya sorunlarına çözüm üretmek için özellikle 2 farklı oluşum ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlar Dünya Ekonomik Forumu ve Dünya Sosyal Forumudur.

Bu tez, öncelikle Dünya'da baş gösteren çeşitli küresel sorunlara ve bu sorunlara sosyal hareketlerin verdiği cevapları araştırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dünya Ekonomik Forum, Dünya Sosyal Forumu, Küreselleşme

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my proffessor Ali Murat Yel for his guidance, patience and valuable contributions throughout the study. This thesis is dedicated to my parents who have always supported me and respected my choices.and special thanks to my wife for her inspiring support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WEF :World Economic Forum

WSF: World Social Forum

ILO : International Labour Organisation

USA: United State Of America

FASE : Federation of Organisations for Social and Educational Assistance

NGO : NonGovernmental Organisations

HIPC : Heavily indebted poor countries

NPT : Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

INTRODUCTION

Capitalism and globalization go hand in hand within the masks of economic growth and development of the gross national products of nations; and, those need many institutions in order to expand the strategies and policies of their interest mechanism to the other side of the world. However, the case is different from the scenario of the powerful states. World Economic Forum is the very tool of that mechanism whereas World Social Forum is the alternative of it in the sense of promoting the idea of the new just and equal world. My aim is to demonstrate the differences in their perspective to globalization in addition to the world capitalist economic ways.

Sustainable development and the use of resources are the main controversial issues in the world. Demographic increase is the main obstacle of the effective and fair distribution of goods. Mortality and fertility rates are not in balance and climate change affects people deeply. Ecological diversity is becoming less and many people can suffer from the global warming. Who diagnoses and fix these problems is the main question. Wealthy nations behave like the owner of the planet and economical measures seem to be the best remedies. Nevertheless, First World's policies are condemned to be collapsed. Third World's malnutrition and sufferage from the global measures prolong. First World organizes and institutionalized. The best example is World Economic Forum. Simultaneously, World Social Forum comes into stage with an alternative anti-globalization movement to the WEF.

World Economic Forum is an independent and international foundation which arranges annual meetings in order to come together of the dispersed capital of globe. It is Swiss based and it promotes the idea of private initiative in public interest. Economic progress is the first rule and with the economic sustainability, forum believes that social development could take place. Forum produces strategies, policies of making profit in global arena. According to forum, all business cooperations should keep in though for the maximum income. Nonetheless, WEF is a global imperial power rather than being a "rich club". The forum really has a manipulative power in the global economic crisis.

Sustainability of ecological resources and distribution of those is in fact bound to the decisions of the participants of the forum who seem to be careful about the global difficulties. Forum is considered as the biggest organization of transnational capital and does not hesitate to "exploit" the poor nations, poor people in the world, planet. It is the very representative of capitalism and competitiveness. WEF has its own alternatives which is the best known is World Social Forum.

World Social Forum opposes to the rule of world by the capital itself and every form of imperialism and defends the superiority of democratic rights and to organize

people whose aim are to create a different world¹. WSF has an international dimension and it is a global social movement. Furthermore, it seeks a new kind of globalization which is respectful to the ecological balance, justice between all people, and independence of the all nations. Yet, WSF is not trying to unite all the social groups in one, and not to be a representative body of all the civil society organizations².

Although, WSF meetings are not the decision making body, implement all the facilities to these groups which involved into the meetings. WSF is not in favor of statism, centralism, and partisan ideology; it merely builds the communication mechanism of all social groups in order to create a “new world”.

As long as WSF participants accept the main arguments of the forum, WSF continues to protect the ethnic diversity and gender equality. Besides, WSF arranges possible discussion organizations in terms of human rights, and democracy; what is more, social inequality of global capital. WSF opposes to the use of physical power and coercion. WSF also promotes the idea of think global, act local principle with active participation.

In order to demonstrate the differences and attitudes of two representative institutions of globalization WEF and WSF, this thesis includes five chapters. In the first chapter, firstly, the demographic changes would be mentioned. How demography is interrelated with the global ecological resources and what are the reasons and results of the overpopulation will be analyzed. Poverty and the unfair economic trade agreements are going to be investigated regarding examples. Furthermore, colonization as a triggering factor of the enlarging gap between rich and poor would be examined. Environmental degradation, climate change and famine as well scarcities as the other factors of global injustice between nations in the same “planet”. Also, the impact of nuclear power in the politics and the social policies will be mentioned in addition to the energy scarcity.

¹ Smith, 2004

² Patomaki and Teivainen, 2004

In the second chapter, it is asserted that global means “civilized” and “sustained” and organized concept which requires social movements. “Movements of movements” emerged and neo-things evolve with dramatic changes which are interrelated and interdependent. To illustrate, gas emissions is a controversial issue that rich exploits the poor at the expense of the pollution instead of protection of the natural balance. Many oppose this fact and involve in transnational protest movements with anti-globalization agendas. The most remarkable group that would be mentioned in detail afterwards, is against NAFTA. These movements have same identity structure in terms of both culture and integrativeness and politics. In addition, these movements are competitive in between and their most significant problem is the debt problem of Third World to IMF. Moreover trade barriers and international rules are not really effective to defend the rights of the weak countries in the world and that fact leads to the coming out of the vanguard of social groups who could be interested in Tobin Tax, international collapse and fair trade movement.

In the third chapter, when global capitalism is considered, it will urgently remind the World Social Forum which is a world wide, movement based; multi scale and multi sited cultural process. Although WSF dreams a new world of justice and equality in international scale; many anti-s organize against to it. As well it is not a decision making organization rather, it works as advisory mechanism. Then, a brief history of WSF would be given in terms of its organizational base of a Swiss foundation. Besides, WSF in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2009 will be elucidated through specific cases, debates and examples in specific sub-sections of the thesis. WSF has an argument on new world with a new globalization approach, however anti and pro capitalisms are considered as vogue perspectives to understand and situate its position.

In chapter four, World Economic Forum will be considered as the core of glocalization and hyperliberalism. Also, WEF has many sectoral private meetings with leaders of economic institutions as being the representative of wealthy nations. Then, the brief history of the WEF will be presented in terms of its highlighted issues in the years

of 2009, 2008, 2006, 2007, 2005, 2002, 2000, 1999, 1994, 1992, 1989, 1988, 1987, 1982, 1979. Lastly, 2009 will be again taken into account. In 2009, WEF meeting of Davos was shaping the post crisis of the world. WEF seeks to stabilize the world economy, maintain global governance and sustainability; facilitate the technological innovations and industry business proliferation in order to prevent economic downfalls. Depression was the real trouble and the enemy of growth potential in competitiveness of physical capital and specialization of liberal economy regarding division of labor.

In chapter five, WSF and WEF would be compared in five terms in view of the place of birth, membership and participation and processes of socio-economic strategies. Therefore, this thesis presents an elaborative research on these two reciprocal organizations.

CHAPTER I

1. GLOBAL ISSUES

The world is becoming smaller, even transformed into a village with regards to the new economic alliances, civil society organizations like NGOs and high technology innovations. It can be said that every single individual is bound to the other living in this planet without considering the nationalities and borders. So global issues are the very problems of the all countries that have to be solved and facilitate sustainability. Demography, economic imbalance, environmental degradation, climate change, nuclear

power, energy scarcity, child mortality rates and terrorism could be accepted as the major global problems that have to be immediately handled. In this chapter, these problems would be analyzed.

1.1. Demography

The first stress discussed in *The Upside of Down* is demographics. Though many preach the Malthusian concept of the problem of overpopulation, Dixon³ argues that this is not the issue. Rather, what should concern the world's population is differential population growth. While one region or area is experiencing little or no growth or even a decline in the population, the population growth in a neighbouring region may be experiencing the exact opposite. This has the potential to lead to an increase in the risk of conflict. According to Anup Shah⁴; "Many feel (as has been the case throughout history) that the major international wars to be fought in the future will continue to be over natural resources. Power conflicts and self-interest will perhaps mean that there will be gross violation of basic rights and death or misery for millions of innocent people. Throughout history, most wars have had trade and resources at their core (leading to ideological battles) fueled by imperialistic motives. In the future, while this pattern is likely to continue, as resources get depleted and wasted in these wars (hot and cold), additional conflicts and contention will arise through access to even more limited resources."

"Many of us have grown up learning and being told that 6 billion is too much and this "over population" is primarily impacting the planet's ability to cope. But is that really the case? Sure, the planet is facing incredible stress. But how much of that is due to large populations, and how much is based on other factors, such as how we choose to live, how we produce, consume and waste our resources? The poor are numerous, but as we shall see, consume far less resources of the planet."⁵

"Ecological resources have some limits to sustain people, but these limits can be different, based on the way we consume resources etc so it is hard to say for sure what

³ Homer Dixon, 2007: 11

⁴ <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/198/human-population> Retrieved on 02.01.2010

⁵ <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/198/human-population> Retrieved on 02.01.2010

over population means let alone if we are at some threshold, below, or above it.”⁶ Nonetheless, it has to be reminded that poverty is the most urgent problem in the world. If we can not feed these people, if they are malnourished; there could emerge a troublesome world. Poor would damned to death via an unfair distribution system, while, the rest could live with shared, communal properties, resources of the earth.

When poverty is considered, “there are numerous causes of poverty. Those causes are found in unfair economic and trade agreements from wealthier nations and institutions. While it might be an oversimplification to say the poor are victims, a lot of poverty, if not the majority is caused by factors which the poor themselves often have no control or choice over. Yet, at the same time the poor seem to get the blame for burdening the planet. Is this the case? While the concern for the environment and the planet's health is usually the central issue here, is there a risk of addressing the issue in ways that may not get to the root causes of any problems that are perceived to require serious attention? This section of the globalissues.org web site attempts to look at and introduce some of these issues”⁷.

“The population in third world countries is currently facing three issues. Though birthrates are falling in these countries, they are still far above the current replacement level. At the same time that this is occurring, death rates are actually declining.”⁸ Finally, within the next several years, a ‘demographic momentum’ will occur in the developing world as much as the population is comprised of young girls just now entering reproductive stages.⁹ Startling numbers are predicted including the fact that Bangladesh’s population will have increased by 70 percent by 2050, while Kenya’s will have increased by about 140 percent by the same year. The same population growth cannot be said of the developed world, with populations actually declining or seeing no growth at all, particularly in Russia and Eastern Europe.¹⁰ Currently, the world population has been estimated at 6.7 billion and will grow by 2.6 billion within the next

⁶ ibid.

⁷ ibid.

⁸ <http://www.worldissues.org> Retrieved on on 01.01.2010

⁹ Thomas, Homer Dixon, 2007: 11

¹⁰ <http://www.prb.org/Publications/%20Datashets/2008/2008wpds.aspx> Retrieved on on 19.12.2009

forty-five years. The majority of this growth will occur in the developing world.¹¹ Amazingly, of the current population number only 1.2 billion live in the United Nations defined ‘developed world.’¹²

Table 1. Population and density figures are from *Population, Environment and Development*

Country	Total (in millions)	Density (People per square kilometer)	GNP rank
China	1,285	134	7
India	1,025	312	11
United States	286	31	1
Indonesia	214	113	30
Russian Federation	145	8	16
Bangladesh	140	975	53
Japan	127	337	2
Nigeria	117	127	55
Germany	82	230	3
United Kingdom	60	244	5

Source : <http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm> Retrieved 12.12.2009,

- “India China, Indonesia, Nigeria and Bangladesh, as nations that have highest population growths.

¹¹ <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/pop918.doc.htm> Retrieved on 19.12.2009

¹² *ibid.*

- We see that some developed countries have higher densities than developing ones, and also vica versa.
- As we will see in the consumption part of this section, some of the wealthier nations, even if they have smaller populations, consume more resources.”¹³

As Anup Shah argues “large populations in and of themselves may not be a bad thing. Many cities in Europe for example, have a higher population density compared to places we normally think of as over crowded, such as India or China. However, where it could cause problems is if demands on natural resources and development increases in an unsustainable and wasteful way, which unfortunately is how it seems to be happening in many places today”¹⁴. Reduction in the birth rates could be a caution in those places, however the enhancement of the conditions of life standards would be a good strategy whether it requires global help strategies.

Demographic policies have their roots in history. Pronatal propagandas, baby booms after wars, or serious economic crises and political agendas of big states could be effective in the population of the world. “It was especially during imperial/colonial times that the small European nations (the “centers of capital and empire”) with large densities had to get their resources from the colonized nations (the “peripheries of empire”) to maintain their high standards of living (and this was really the wealthier classes in Europe, not all people). The Imperial European nations’ ecological footprint was often larger than the size of the nation itself. (This still goes on today with today’s “empires” such as USA, Japan and Western Europe, via trade and economic policies which we will see in following sections.)”¹⁵

Population rates could not be necessarily dangerous unless it goes through overpopulated region in a limited scale. “A lot of complex reasons all play a role in determining where a large population would be “over” population, such as:

¹³ <http://www.globalissues.org/article/199/population-numbers> Retrieved on 12.12.2009

¹⁴ <http://www.globalissues.org/article/199/population-numbers> Retrieved on 03.01.2010

¹⁵ *ibid.*

- the exploitative consumption and trading policies that have [resulted](#) in poverty of many people which, in some places, has lead to unsustainable use of the environment just to survive
- or due to a region where the ecosystem cannot usually cope under larger populations or changing demands of a given population
- cultural and other societal differences that affect how large family sizes are, or how resources are consumed and shared, or not or due to a region where the ecosystem cannot usually cope under larger populations or changing demands of a given population
- cultural and other societal differences that affect how large family sizes are, or how resources are consumed and shared, or not”¹⁶

1.2. Economic Imbalance

Economic imbalance, the second global stressor, is apparent both within and across every country. The growing gap between the rich and the poor has the potential to lead to the same consequences as that of population change. Conflict can quickly become reality as the gap between rich and poor widens. Many previously colonized developing countries struggle to pay back massive debt loads owed to countries of the North and to international organizations.

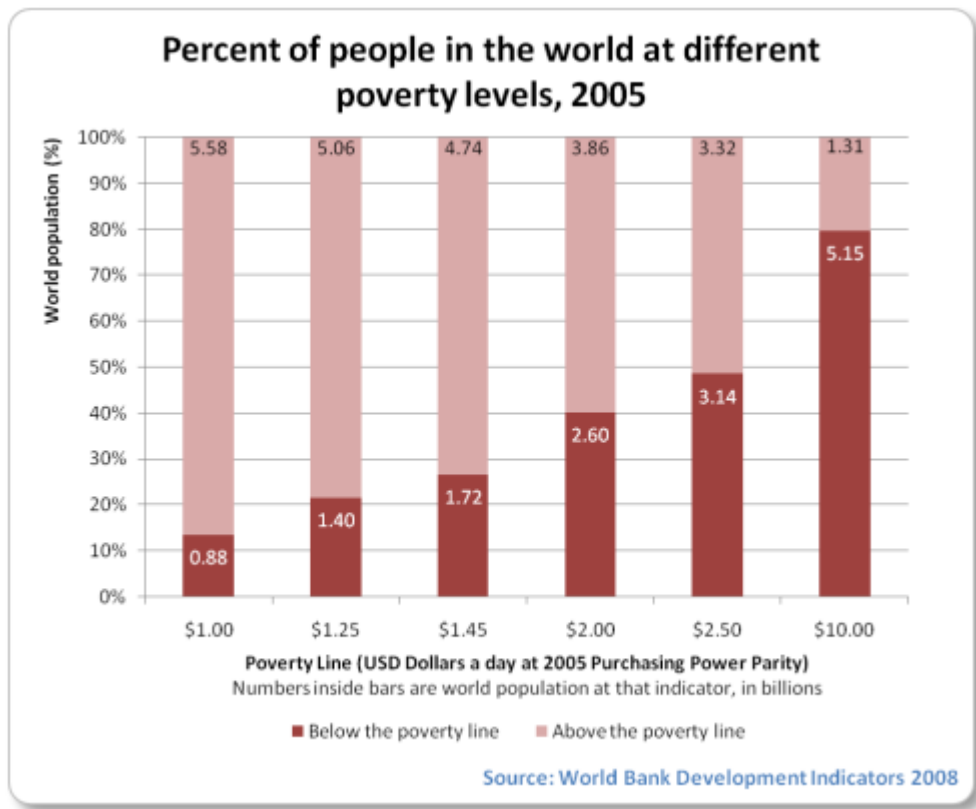
Though colonization has formally ended, academics such as economist Larry Elliot argue that debt loads have allowed colonization to be informally perpetuated. Countries in the North have more resources in which to develop technological advances and, in turn, countries in the South are becoming more and more subordinate to the developed world.¹⁷ The World Bank recently released a study that showed one-fifth of the population in the developing world live on less than what a dollar a day would be able to buy in the United States. Approximately half of the population of the developing

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Corbeil, 2009: 8

world lives on less than two dollars US a day. On the other side of the coin, the world has a current population of 793 billionaires, who hold a combined wealth of 2.6 trillion dollars. This staggering number is equivalent to twenty percent of the United States annual GDP. Most of humanity lives on just a few dollars a day. Whether you live in the wealthiest nations in the world or the poorest, you will see high levels of inequality.

Figure 1: Percent of people in the world at different poverty levels, 2005



“The poorest people will also have less access to health, education and other services. Problems of hunger, malnutrition and disease afflict the poorest in society. The poorest are also typically marginalized from society and have little representation or

voice in public and political debates, making it even harder to escape poverty.”¹⁸ The unfair economic mechanism affects the poor deeply and their escape from poverty is becoming impossible; also their deprivation increases day by day.

“By contrast, the wealthier you are, the more likely you are to benefit from economic or political policies. The amount the world spends on military, financial bailouts and other areas that benefit the compared to the amount spent to address the daily crisis of poverty and related problems are often staggering.”¹⁹ All policies in the world are designed to protect the rights and welfare of the rich. Rich does not aware of the situation of poor, rather they are trying to maximize their benefits.

“On the one hand many people are concerned that those responsible for the financial problems are the ones being bailed out, while on the other hand, a global financial meltdown will affect the livelihoods of almost everyone in an increasingly inter-connected world. The problem could have been avoided, if ideologues supporting the current economics models weren’t so vocal, influential and inconsiderate of others’ viewpoints and concerns.”²⁰ Like financial problems, world has another trouble of the environmental degradation which has to be overcome as soon as possible.”

1.3. Environmental Degradation

Environment is the part of human ecology where all creatures are interrelated to each other. So any damage in anywhere could lead to a global problem. “Environmental degradation is occurring worldwide but has its most serious consequences on those people who are living at a level that allows them to simply exist, rather than thrive. To the poor subsistence farmer in Latin America environmental degradation is a harsh certainty. With techniques such as slash and burn agriculture, forests such as those in the Amazon Basin are destroyed. This leads to a massive number of people moving to urban areas where the obstacles to success are even greater.”²¹ Deplorable examples of

¹⁸ <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/2/causes-of-poverty> Retrieved on 12.12.2009

¹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰ <http://www.linkroll.com/Environmental-News-and-Society--124069-CAUSES-OF-GLOBAL-FINACIAL-CRISIS.html> Retrieved on 02.01.2010

²¹ Michael & Davis, 2006: 28

environmental stress are discussed in Mike Davis' *Planet of the Slums*. Many people are forced to forego safe living conditions. "Johannesburg's shantytown periphery ... conforms unerringly to a belt of dangerous, unstable soil contaminated by generations of mining. At least half of the region's non-white population lives in informal settlements of toxic waste and chronic ground collapse."²² "The slums of Johannesburg seem to be the rule, rather than the exception. Davis lists similar examples of people living in environments destroyed by human activity across the globe from Tokyo to Los Angeles and all points in between."²³ "An example of this can be seen in the development of the Three Gorges Dam in Central China. Over 1.3 million people have been displaced in the name of China's desire to shift to a market economy."²⁴ "Natural habitats have also been destroyed as the disruption of water flow has led to a lack of necessary nutrients from reaching the various fish species that live in the Yangtze River. This has led to a significant decrease in the fish populations in this area."²⁵ All the creatures in the planet, now encounter with the changes in the normal weather conditions, as well climate changes. This fact could bring lots of problems in the future.

1.4. Climate Change

"Population migrations and environmental degradation are also interconnected. For a number of years, there have been concerns that climate change negotiations will essentially ignore a key principle of climate change negotiation frameworks: the common but differentiated responsibilities."²⁶

"This recognizes that historically:

- Industrialized nations have emitted far more greenhouse gas emissions (even if some developing nations are only now increasing theirs);
- Rich countries therefore face the biggest responsibility and burden for action to address climate change; and

²² ibid

²³ Homer Dixon, 2007: 11

²⁴ Sukhan Jackson & Adrian, Sleigh, 2001

²⁵ W, Steffen, 2002

²⁶ <http://www.worldissues.org> Retrieved on on 19.12.2010

- Rich countries therefore must support developing nations adapt—through financing and technology transfer, for example.”²⁷

“This notion of climate justice is typically ignored by many rich nations and their mainstream media, making it easy to blame China, India and other developing countries for failures in climate change mitigation negotiations.”²⁸

“Development expert, Martin Khor, calculated that taking historical emissions into account, the rich countries owe a carbon debt because they have already used more than their fair quota of emissions. Yet, by 2050 when certain emission reductions are needed by, their reduced emissions will still add up to be go over their fair share. However, rather than continue down the path of unequal development, industrialized nations can help pay off their carbon debt by truly helping emerging countries develop along a cleaner path, such as through the promised-but-barely-delivered technology transfer, finance, and capacity building.”²⁹

“So far however, rich nations have done very little within the Kyoto protocol to reduce emissions by any meaningful amount, while they are all for negotiating a follow on treaty that brings more pressure to developing countries to agree to emissions targets. In effect, the more there will be delay the more the poor nations will have to save the Earth with their sacrifices (and if it works, as history shows, the rich and powerful will find a way to rewrite history to claim they were the ones that saved the planet).”³⁰

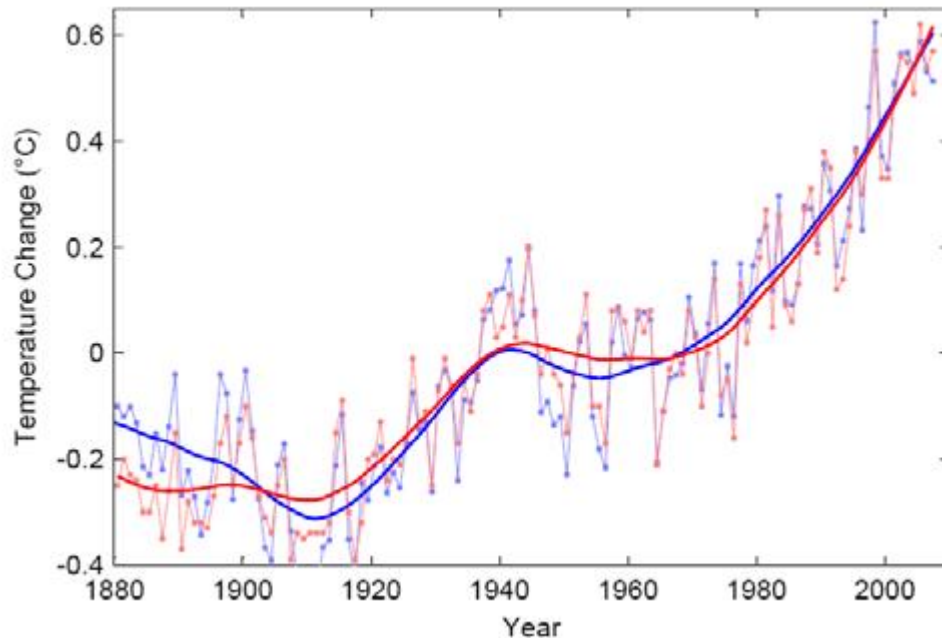
Figure 2: Global mean temperature up to 2007

²⁷ Anup Shah, <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/178/climate-change-and-global-warming> Retrieved on 20.01.2010

²⁸ <http://www.globalissues.org/article/231/climate-justice-and-equity> Retrieved on 12.12.2009

²⁹ <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/178/climate-change-and-global-warming> Retrieved on 12.12.2009

³⁰ <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/178/climate-change-and-global-warming> Retrieved on 12.12.2010



“Global mean temperature up to 2007 according to the two main data compilations: NASA in red and Hadley Centre in blue. Dots show annual values, heavy lines a non-linear trend smoothed over 15 years. Numbers are deviations relative to 1951-1980.”³¹

“Global warming worsens droughts and desertification and the intensity of major weather patterns, which, in turn leads to the destruction of forests by infestations of pine beetles. According to David Suzuki, climate change is considered by many prominent scientists to be the most serious threat that our world is currently facing.”³²

“The global food crisis that has made headlines in 2008 has been simmering for a while. The rise in food prices, affecting the poorest the most, has a variety of causes, mostly man-made. It has resulted in riots, an overthrow of a Prime Minister and many deaths, around the world. It has been common to attribute causes to things like overpopulation but that seems to miss the real causes as food levels continue to outstrip demand even in a growing population. While media reports have been concentrating on

³¹ <http://www.pik-potsdam.de/~stefan/warmingfacts.pdf> Retrieved on on 11.11.2009

³² <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/> Retrieved on on 17.11. 2009

some of the immediate causes, it seems that deeper issues and causes have not been discussed as much.”³³

1.5. Nuclear Power

The NPT was ratified in 1975. It has been ratified by 187 countries, more than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement. The objective is “to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.” “Some 180+ countries thus agreed not to pursue nuclear weapons in exchange for the nuclear powers to adhere to treaties that would have the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. However, as others have put more bluntly, this treaty was to prevent new members from joining the “nuclear club.”³⁴ START I and II were designed to reduce the weapons that Russia and the US have.

“All four of these have been under pressure for a few years:

- The NPT is seen by some critics as a means for the five nuclear powers at that time to retain their weapons while telling others not to develop them, and thus allow these five to remain militarily more powerful than other nations. This is feared to then provide a pretext for other countries to develop their own nuclear weapons. For example,³⁵
 - India, Pakistan, Israel and Cuba did not sign the NPT.
 - India and Pakistan went nuclear in 1998.
 - Israel is known to have nuclear capabilities too.
 - North Korea went nuclear in 2006. (More on this below.)
- “The US is currently looking at developing an expensive national missile defense system, which goes against the ABM treaty. [Since writing this page initially, the U.S. has withdrawn from the ABM Treaty.]

³³ <http://www.globalissues.org/whatsnew/2008/june> Retrieved on 19.12.2009

³⁴ <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/67/nuclear-weapons> Retrieved on 19.12.2009

³⁵ *ibid*

- Although President Clinton had signed it in 1995, the US Senate rejected the CTBT in 1999. Other countries such as China and Iran are also “balking” on the idea, using the excuses of U.S. policies and costs, for example, as reported by *Reuters* (March 7, 2002).
- Russia initially stalled on START II because of the USA’s national missile defense program. However, they finally endorsed the treaty in April 2000, but warned that if the US still pursues its missile defense program, which goes against the ABM treaty, then Russia would pull out of the arms negotiations.”³⁶

“While the major nuclear powers have agreed to eliminate their nuclear arsenal at a UN review of the NPT, it remains to be seen how much of that will be rhetoric and how much real political will there will be to follow it through.”³⁷ It is indeed a power game every country wants to be in. Nuclear power is the tool of potential ruling in the global politics. In fact, there are many treaties in order not to have any uncontrolled nuclear power. “At the center of the nonproliferation regime is the 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)... this treaty is based upon an important tradeoff. The nonnuclear weapons states agree not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons, and the nuclear weapons states agree to engage in good faith negotiations for nuclear disarmament.”³⁸

“Unfortunately, the nuclear weapons states, and particularly the United States, seem to have made virtually zero progress in the past five years. Despite its pledges to do otherwise, the United States has failed to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; opposed a verifiable fissile material cutoff treaty; substituted the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), which is fully reversible, for the START treaties; scrapped the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, opening the door for deployment of missile defenses and moves toward placing weapons in outer space; kept nuclear weapons at the center of

³⁶ ibid

³⁷ <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/67/nuclear-weapons> Retrieved on 10.01.2010

³⁸ David Kreiger, 2005

its security policies, including research to create new nuclear weapons; and demonstrated no political will toward the elimination of its nuclear arsenal.”³⁹

The impacts of our current lack of action to reduce green house gas emissions have been predicted but slowing the rate of the climate change while imperative appears to be increasingly difficult. These kinds of problems also lead to the emergence of energy scarcity.

1.6. Energy Scarcity

Energy scarcity and the transition from our dependence on oil and other fossil fuels is the sixth stress. We are consuming non-renewable resources at an alarmingly quick rate. According to the Lightcone Institute, an American research organization that seeks to “foster the organization of scientific research and its embedding into society,” the demand the world has placed on oil and natural gas is becoming increasingly difficult to provide.⁴⁰ Peak oil refers to the time in which the maximum output of petroleum extraction is reached, followed by a permanent decline in the production of oil. Once the peak has been recognized, production will go down, and costs will continue to increase.⁴¹ Lightcone and other research institutes provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the energy scarcity crisis. Rather than simply running out of these resources, the concern is that there simply will not be enough to keep any economy afloat.

The authors compare this idea to dehydration in the human body. Though we may not lose *all* the water in our body, a certain percentage of loss will be enough to cause our collapse. The oil crisis of the 1970s was only a temporary one, whereas the forthcoming oil crisis has greater likelihood to become permanent. Across the world, people will be forced to change their entire way of life because of the reality of energy scarcity. The irony of this is that, the longer it takes us to gain independence from fossil

³⁹ David Kreiger, 2005

⁴⁰ http://lightconeinstitute.de/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=48
Retrieved on 01.01.2010

⁴¹ <http://www.lifeaftertheoilcrash.net> Retrieved on 10.10.2009

fuels the more GHG emissions will be discharged into the global environment, which of course intensifies global warming and the child mortality rates.

1.7. Child Mortality Rates

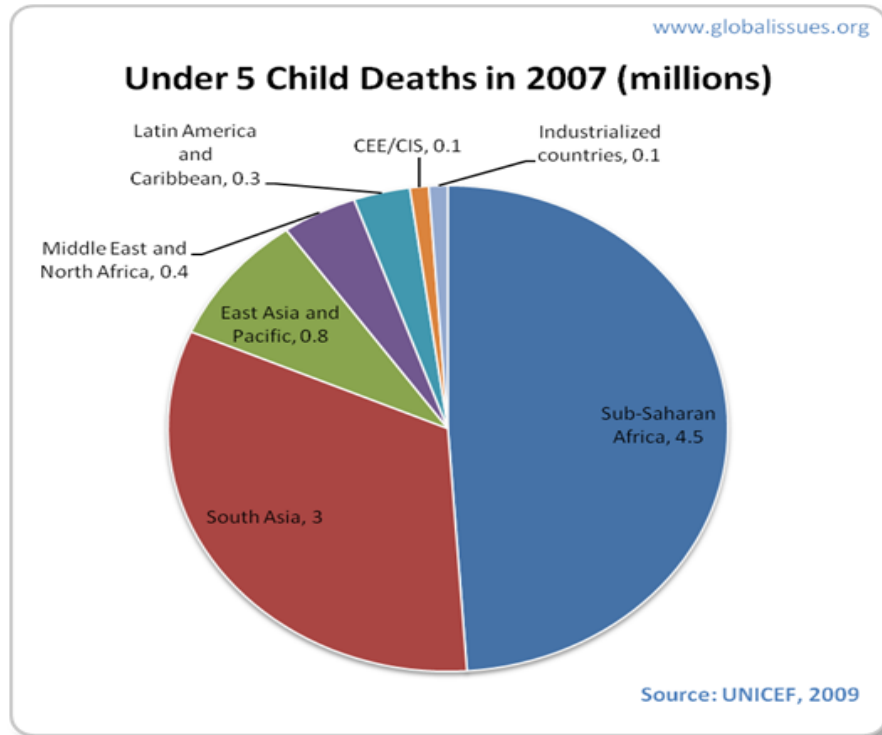
Child mortality depends on the fact of malnutrition and many children in the world are suffering from the unfair distribution of resources in backward regions. “Over 25,000 children die every day around the world.

That is equivalent to:

- 1 child dying every 3.5 seconds
- 17-18 children dying every minute
- A 2004 Asian Tsunami occurring almost every 1.5 weeks
- An Iraq-scale death toll every 16–38 days
- Over 9 million children dying every year
- Some 70 million children dying between 2000 and 2007”⁴²

Figure 3: Under 5 child deaths in 2007

⁴² <http://www.globalissues.org/print/article/715> Retrieved on 03.01.2010



“The silent killers are poverty, easily preventable diseases and illnesses, and other related causes. In spite of the scale of this daily/ongoing catastrophe, it rarely manages to achieve, much less sustain, prime-time, headline coverage.”⁴³ Lastly, it could be said that the increase in child mortality rates is a very significant global problem. It should be reduced with global policies which have some fertility control attempts and improvement of life quality.

1.8 Terrorism

Terrorism is the last but not the least important problem regarding global issues and transnational economic balances. According to Wilkins⁴⁴, “terrorism is the attempt to achieve political, social, economic, or religious change by the actual or threatened use of violence against persons or property”. As Huntington⁴⁵ asserts; the clash of civilizations has turned into “the war of civilizations” and who are making this war is the cultures

⁴³ <http://www.globalissues.org/article/715/today-over-24000-children-died-around-the-world>

Retrieved on 12.01.2010

⁴⁴ 1992: 12

⁴⁵ Adrian Guelke, 2006

themselves; moreover, political instability of the Third World⁴⁶ which is the modernization ideology of West. Terrorism⁴⁷ is in fact a political term which has a violence aspect and acquisition of power; furthermore, it is planned, calculated act.

According to Li and Schaub⁴⁸, terrorist groups are divided into three. First group could carry an ideology, a religious attachment, or nihilist and separatist feelings and could involve a long term struggle. They have irrational behaviors and want to fulfill their goals and they are the negotiators of benefit maximization with the state and the authority whatever it is. Second one is the utility proliferation group of legal and illegal organizations. They would like to gain relative gains in the collective resources. Third group is the rational terrorists who are opposing to the specific constraints in the societal structure.

According to Hoffman⁴⁹, since 1980s, the type of terrorism changed through a state-sponsored terrorism. Some governments have foreign policies as deliberate instruments in waging war and in the surrogate warriors or “guns for hire”— of terrorists. As Li and Schaub⁵⁰ state, “economic globalization may also positively affect the level of transnational terrorism in a state by increasing the density of desirable targets present within that state”.

Social welfare policies could affect the existence of terrorism; that is social security, declining ratio of unemployment, health facilities, education spending could reduce the terrorist attacks in the world⁵¹. According to Rosendorff and Sandler⁵², while considering the global problems, terrorism could be abolished with a global act with social policies that would be implemented by welfare states. However domestic terrorism does not require world wide cooperation; transnational one necessitates a political economy which involves a counterterrorism policy, international cooperation

⁴⁶ ibid

⁴⁷ Bruce Hoffman, 2006

⁴⁸ 2004: 233

⁴⁹ Bruce Hoffman, 2006

⁵⁰ 2004: 236

⁵¹ Burgoon, 2006

⁵² 2006

and consolidation of democracy; in addition collaboration between former terrorists and the governments.

Therefore, terrorism is the violent attacks on the nations in the world in which everyone could be harmed. Global terrorists threat the security of people either in physical terms or in economical benefits. Global terrorism; even terrorism in its every form; could not be solved without any organized collective activity. So firstly a global based reduction policy of terrorism should be implemented, then this problem has to be diminished. In chapter two, global issues and responses would be analyzed in terms of movements and non-governmental organizations.

CHAPTER II

2.1. Global Issues and Social Movement Responses

Global civil society is believed to be “bigger” and “wider” offering “a positive response, even counterweight, to a narrow notion that linked globalization to economic processes alone”⁵³.

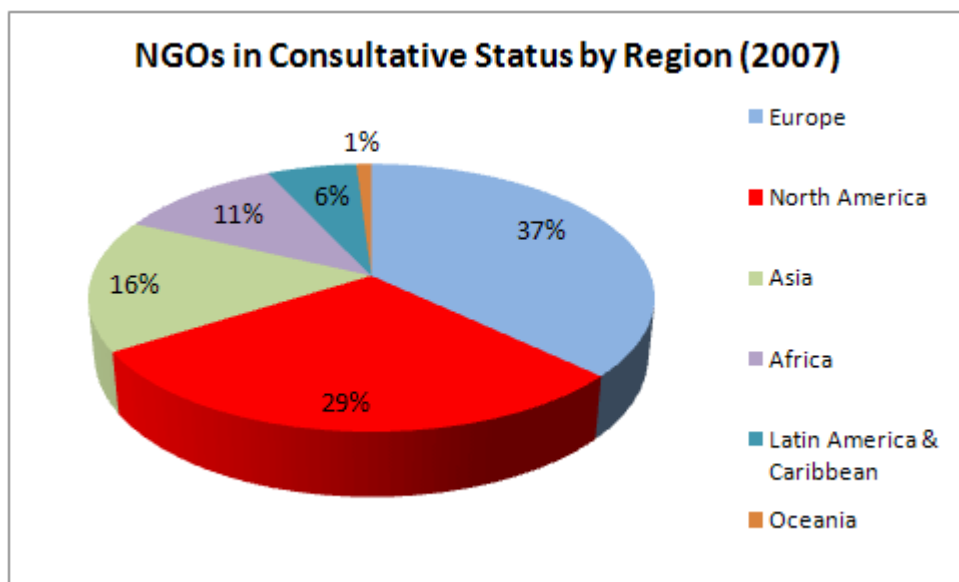
“If a social movement is to be defined as “organized” and a somewhat “sustained” process to advance a specific cause, interest or pursuit, there would be examples of social movements at various levels. Scholars like Escobar see social movements as sources of alternatives, hopes and theories of how the world can be made differently”⁵⁴. In a similar fashion, “Bourdieu asserts that there can be no change in the functioning of global economic systems and dominant institutions without powerful social movements. He argues, “It’s not the market, as it’s tried to make us believe today, but the social movement, which has ‘civilized’ the market economy while largely contributing to its efficacy”⁵⁵

Figure 4 : NGOs in consultative Status by Region

⁵³ Ghimire, Accessed from http://www.unrisd.org/published/_pp/_cssm/_ghimire/ghimire.swf?EnablePrinting=True?EnableDownload=False Retrieved on 12.12.2009

⁵⁴ Ghimire, Accessed from http://www.unrisd.org/published/_pp/_cssm/_ghimire/ghimire.swf?EnablePrinting=True?EnableDownload=False Retrieved on 12.12.2009

⁵⁵ Bourdieu, 2001. Contre-feux 2. Editions Raisons d’Agir, Paris.
quoted in *ibid.* p.1



Source : <http://www.globalpolicy.org/tables-and-charts-ql/ngos-tcql/32120.html> retrieved 19.12.2010

“The 'Global Justice and Solidarity Movement' (GJ&SM) is actually a name *proposed by* the Call, for the general wave of protest against corporate-dominated globalisation, against US-sponsored neoliberalism / neo-conservatism and war, one name for the new wave of radical-democratic protest and counter-proposition.”⁵⁶

This 'movement of movements' is marked by its network form and communication activity; a matter recognised by friends and enemies alike.⁵⁷ Moreover, 'it' seems to change size, shape, reach, scale, target and aims according to events. So, at one moment it might be focussed against neoliberal economic globalisation, at another against the US-led war on Iraq. This makes it even more challenging to analyse than to name. Like any novel phenomenon, the GJ&SM is easier to characterise by what it is *not* than by what it is:⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Waterman, Accessed from www.euromovements.info/upload/peter.doc Retrieved from 01.01.2010

⁵⁷ Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001; Cleaver 1998; Escobar 2003; Klein 2001 quoted in Waterman www.euromovements.info/upload/peter.doc Retrieved on 12.01.2010

⁵⁸ Peter Waterman “From Comrades’ Agreements to the Reinvention of Social Emancipation”. Unpublished manuscript, 4.2.2003. Accessed from www.euromovements.info/upload/peter.doc Retrieved on 12.01.2010

- It is *not* an international labour or socialist movement, though unions and socialists are prominently involved;
- It is *not* a 'transnational advocacy network', though it is much marked by the presence of international and national NGOs;
- It is *not* a reincarnation of the international protest wave following 1968, though Che Guevara icons are still popular, and it includes other clear echoes of the sixties and seventies;
- It is *not* an anarchist movement, though anarchists, autonomists and libertarians are highly active within it;
- It is *not* a nationalist or thirdworldist movement, though nationalist, thirdworldist and anti-imperialist forces and notes can be clearly identified within it; It is, on the other hand, not too difficult to identify a rising number of processes that have *provoked* this movement. These include :
 - the increasing predominance, in the international sphere, of multinational corporations and international financial institutions, along with the neoliberal policies that have been imposed on both North and the South ;
 - The shrinking of the public sphere and reduction of State social programmes and subsidies;
 - The feminisation of poverty, the commodification of women (the sex trade), the simultaneous formal endorsement and political denial of women's and sexual rights;
 - de-industrialisation, unemployment and the informalisation of employment;
 - The ideology of competitiveness as the court of first and last appeal;
 - The undermining of market protection (primarily of weaker national economies);
 - The simultaneous preaching and practical undermining of traditional structures and notions of national sovereignty;
 - The simultaneous creation of new international institutions and regulations, alongside the marginalisation of the United Nations and such agencies as the International Labour Organisation (ILO);

- Increasing talk of and the continuing undermining of ecological sustainability; corporate attempts to copyright genetic resources, to genetically modify foodstuffs, to commercialise them and then coerce people into buying them; the continuation and even increase of militarism, militarisation and warfare despite hopes raised by the end of the Cold War;
- The increase in globalised epidemics and threats to the climate;
- The demonisation of immigrants, asylum-seekers, and of Islam and other 'others'. All these have dramatically raised social tensions, particularly in the South, but also in the East (the ex-Communist world) and even in such model core capitalist welfare states as Canada and Sweden.

“The pressures have also provoked major conservative, reactionary, religious and ethnic backlashes, of a violent and repressive nature, sometimes internationally co-ordinated”⁵⁹. On the other hand, intellectuals like Touraine ⁶⁰ contend, “social movements are not positive or negative agents of history, of modernization, or of the liberalization of mankind. They act in a given type of social production and organization”⁶¹.

Touraine also believes that “social movements are not any dramatic or exceptional events: they are in a permanent manner the heart of the social life”⁶².

“Indeed, differing philosophical and, at times, cultural origins of definitions of social movements should not be overlooked—in particular between those who see social movements primarily as organizational and political opportunities ⁶³ and those who perceive them as effects as well as results of power structures, class struggles, and identity politics.

⁵⁹ ibid.

⁶⁰ Alain. Touraine, 1985: 774

⁶¹ ibid

⁶² Touraine 1978:47 quoted in Ghimire, 2005: 2

⁶³ Doug McAdam, 1997 quoted in Ghimire, 2005: 2

In other words, if we want to solve the problems our world is currently facing we must first acknowledge them as interrelated and cumulative. Rather than looking at global issues in terms of their interconnections, too many of us seem to consider them from a single perspective.

Though both the Chrétien and Martin governments were supportive of the Kyoto Treaty, neither was able to reduce GHG emissions. The Harper government is absolutely opposed to the treaty and its targets. Canadians' natural reaction seems to be either denial or an overabundance in social movements. This nonresponse works very much in connection with the five main assumptions of neoliberalism because it allows the general population to simply sit back and allow the economic system and government to make all the major decisions⁶⁴.

“The Red Cross was founded in 1863. The trade unions and communist party-related movements have been mobilizing huge numbers of people around the world since the end of the nineteenth century. In the 1960s and 1970s, campaigns related to peace, nuclear policy, environment, human rights, feminist rights and so forth— usually described “new social movements” in the European academic debate because of their broad membership base cutting across different social groups and classes—mustered a widespread public backing. Even though many of these movements were based primarily in the North and transpired in reaction to the malaise associated with industrial society, they have continued to remain an important constituent in popular contestation worldwide.”⁶⁵

“In recent years, transnational protest movements, known collectively as the “anti-globalization” movement, have brought together diverse social forces with multiple and sometimes contradictory agendas. Typically, they use the outlet of international conferences and summits and, most recently, regional and international annual gatherings of the According to George Monbiot; global citizens should not be

⁶⁴ Becker, 2006

⁶⁵ Ghimire, 2005: 2 Accessed from: www.upd.edu.ph/~twsc/unrisd_newsletter1/ghimire.pdf
Retrieved on 10.11.2009

surprised at the current financial and environmental state of affairs. He argues, “In both cases, those who exploit the resource have demanded impossible rates of return and invoked debts that can never be repaid. In both cases we denied the likely consequences.”⁶⁶

A movement is defined as a group of people with similar ideologies and values working towards a common goal. There are many different types of social movements. The new protest movements of the emerging century are mostly identified with the North. They are also associated with the middle classes, students and youth, who have been prominent in these movements. “But so have women, forming around 50 per cent at the World Social Forums, though this is little commented on. But the movement cannot be limited to major protest events, nor to what has occurred since 1999. It must be traced both back and down, at least to the ‘food riots’ provoked by the IMF in the South of the eighties, when there were urban uprisings against the externally-imposed end of food subsidies. Widespread protests against gigantic and ecologically damaging dam projects, promoted by the World Bank and developmentalist local elites, go back to the eighties and earlier. There were major demonstrations and riots against the poll tax in Britain in 1990. Through the 1990s, there were myriad protests across the South against the euphemistically-named Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in particular, and neoliberal policies more generally”⁶⁷. One major manifestation of US-initiated neoliberalism has been the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which provoked widespread protest in both Canada and Mexico.

In the case of Canada, which is the most typical example of social movements, there emerged an initial national-protectionist campaign into one of international solidarity, first with Mexico, then with Latin America more generally, leading to the Hemispheric Social Alliance, which included the USA. In the case of Mexico, the launching date of the NAFTA, January 1, 1994, was used for the launching also of the Zapatista movement in the severely globalised, marginalised and exploited state of

⁶⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁷ Peter Waterman, 2003: 57. Accessed from:
www.choike.org/documentos/wsf_s110_waterman.pdf Retrieved on 01.01.2010

Chiapas, in the South of Mexico.⁶⁸ “Initially appearing as a classical armed guerrilla movement based on the discriminated and land-hungry Mayan ethnic communities of Chiapas, the Zapatistas rapidly revealed entirely novel characteristics: an address to Mexican civil society, a high-profile internationalism, a sophisticated understanding and use of both the mass media and alternative electronic communications. All can be found in the speeches and writings of its primary spokesperson, Sub-Commander Marcos (Rafael Guillén) a university-educated non-indigene, trained in guerrilla warfare in Cuba. Activities of the Zapatistas, particularly two international *encuentros*, one in Chiapas, 1996, one in Spain, 1997, gave rise, or shape, to a new wave of internationalism”⁶⁹.

“Other major sources of, or contributors to the new movement must be mentioned particularly the rising wave of protest against unemployment, privatisation and cuts in social services gathering steam throughout the nineties, markedly in Europe and the increasing development of ‘counter-expertise’, concentrated in international and national NGOs which had been honed at a series of UN conferences and summits through the 1990s — notably the 1992 World Conference on Environment and Development and the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women”⁷⁰.

When the terrorist attack on New York and Washington occurred on September 11, 2001, there was a stalemate in the growing movement in North America (Seattle 1999; Washington DC 2000; Quebec 2001). Yet, with the US-led wars against Afghanistan, 2002 and Iraq, 2003, a movement often considered to be primarily ‘anti-corporate’ morphed into the biggest international anti-war protest in history. A ‘New York Times’ columnist stated, February 18, 2003, ‘there may still be in our planet, two super-powers : the United States and world public opinion’. A 300-strong anti-war demonstration took place even in Lima, Peru. This is a country profoundly traumatised and isolated by decades of neoliberalism, counter-insurgency and authoritarian rule, and

⁶⁸ *ibid*

⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁰ *ibid*

which had — unlike neighbouring Brazil, Ecuador and Bolivia — previously revealed only marginal awareness of the new internationalist wave.⁷¹ The language of the new radical-democratic protest movements is increasingly infecting some of the 50–100-year-old international trade union organisations, such as the recently renamed Global Union Federations (GUFs). And trade unions, which have 150–200 million members worldwide, are increasingly attracted by the WSF.¹¹ The WSF has been held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2001–3, and is scheduled for Mumbai, India, in 2004. If the earlier mentioned protest events were frequently marked more by *opposition* than *proposition*, the Forums have not only been devoted to *counter* proposition over a remarkably wide range of social issues (with a wide range of significant collective actors). They have also demonstrated that what is shaping up is much more than a northern, or even a western hemispheric internationalism. The Forum process, moreover, has now reached take off, with national, regional and thematic forums taking place all over the world. Some of these may be independent of the WSF itself. The WSF has also become both the subject and the site of intense reflection concerning its own significance, nature and future⁷². Four of the most important types of social movements are as follows:

2.1. Identity of Movements

People with a particular similar identity, be it race, age, gender or religion gather and form an organization; so these movements come together in order to give the people of the chosen identity a voice. In “Identity Movements” Simon Langlois uses the example of Aboriginal Identity movements when discussing this type of social movement. First Nations across Canada, and across the globe, have long struggled with marginalization, cultural assimilation and poverty. Currently, many First Nations are challenging for control of several institutions in order to preserve their united characteristics.⁷³

An integrative movement looks to provide people with access to the central structures of power. Rather than all power being given to a dominant group, integrative

⁷¹ Waterman, 2003

⁷² Watermen, 2003

⁷³ Simon, Langlois, 2001

movements hope to distribute some of the power to their own movement. The women's movement is the most obvious example of this type of social movement as it seeks gender equality⁷⁴.

A cultural movement hopes to bring about change within a culture through the organization of the powerful members of the movement. This is achieved by changing the Outlook of people within the culture, which will in turn, change the way in which they behave. The civil rights movements of the 1960s are an example of a cultural movement. This movement hoped to change not only the outlook of the culture itself, but also that of the dominant culture at large so that human rights for black Americans would be recognized⁷⁵.

Political movements are similar to cultural movements because their main objective is that of socio-economic or political change. Unlike cultural movements, however, these types of movements look to gain access to political institutions in order to recognize transformations. The anti-globalization movement is an example of a political social movement because its supporters seek to reverse the neoliberal economic approach.⁷⁶

This general cynicism has allowed governments to be elected throughout the world who favour neo-liberal economic policies, which exacerbates global crises. Why are so many people so complacent? As discussed earlier, a vast number of citizens live in a state of denial, a denial that neo-liberal capitalism is accelerating the impacts of our global problems⁷⁷.

“Another difficulty with respect to social movement theories is that they are, for the most part, conceptualized in the national arena of industrialized societies in Western

⁷⁴ Corbeil, Jessica, 2009 “A Movement of Ideas? The World Social Forum, Is It a Model for Political Change? January 2009 CCPA Accessed from: (nl149.policyalternatives.ca/.../Movement_of_Ideas_World_Social_Forum.pdf) Retrieved in 12.01.2010

⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁷⁶ <http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~jklumpp/comm461/socmov.html> Retrieved on 25.11.2009

⁷⁷ Dixon, 2007: 11 quoted in Corbeil, 2009: 12

Europe and North America. Yet there have been transnational social movements that transcend the Western world at different junctures in time and context, inspire a considerable number of people, and produce major results. Various religious movements have already gained an intercontinental character several centuries ago”⁷⁸. For example, the anti-slavery movement and the campaign for women suffrage are seen by some academics as being “historical forerunners” to modern advocacy movements ⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Ghimire, 2005: 2 Accessed from: www.upd.edu.ph/~twsc/unrisd_newsletter1/ghimire.pdf
Retrieved on 10.11.2009

⁷⁹ Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, 1998 quoted in Ghimire, 2005

CHAPTER III

3. THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

“The concentration of power in transnational and global institutions was one of the most significant social processes of the 20th century. Nevertheless, democratic theory and practice have remained very nation-state-centered. Although there were some examples of cosmopolitan democratic thinking and transnational democratic practice throughout the century, most analysts and politicians simply ignored them”⁸⁰. An example of a reasonably moderate attempt to democratize global power relations, especially as regards the North-South dimension, was the 1970s project of the New International Economic Order (NIEO). It did not, however, lead to any significant redistribution of power and was considered a failure by most commentators of the 1980s and 1990s. “At the very end of the century, the public perception of the issues at stake seemed to be changing”⁸¹. While, for example, designating the undemocratic nature of the International Monetary Fund as a significant political problem was generally not taken very seriously in the early 1990s, in the last years we have seen substantial crowds of people marching on the streets pointing out this problem.

“Global capitalism may have entered one of its most serious legitimacy crises. More significantly but with less media attention, organized protests around these issues have been taking place in the more peripheral parts of our world. Some Third World observers, such as Camilo Guevara, characterize Seattle and other similar media events in the US and Europe as rather irrelevant for the great majorities of the world”⁸². The meetings of the formally private elite organizations such as the Bilderberg Society, Trilateral Commission and Mont Pelerin Society have tended to attract less public attention than those of the Bretton Woods institutions and other semi-public multilateral organs.

⁸⁰ Teivo Teivainen, <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

⁸¹ Teivo Teivainen 2003 http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-world/article_1342.jsp Retrieved on 12.01.2010

⁸² Teivo Teivainen, <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

Nevertheless, they constitute highly influential networks of transnational coordination in matters of global governance. One of the most influential and controversial of them is the World Economic Forum. The first informal business gathering in Davos, a Swiss mountain town, took place in January 1971 under the name of European Management Forum. Since 1982 the Davos meeting has focused on bringing world economic leaders to its annual meetings, and in 1987 it got its present name World Economic Forum.⁸³ In January 1999, after various years of preparations, various organizations started organizing a counterevent in Switzerland under the banners of “another Davos” and “anti-Davos”. Apart from the World Forum of Alternatives, these included the French journal *Le Monde Diplomatique* and ATTAC, founded in France in June 1998.⁸⁴ “In the first major anti-Davos event, organized simultaneously with the WEF 2000, various groups ranging from the World Women's March to the Brazilian Landless Rural Workers first had a seminar in Zurich and then marched to Davos to hold a press conference and, some 150 of them, to face cold weather and Robocop-like police in a demonstration”⁸⁵.

“The WSF — promoted by an identifiable group of Brazilian, French and other non-governmental organisations, trade unions and individuals — is itself linked organically to the more general movement. This is through an informal Forum event, known as the ‘Call of Social Movements’, which has been attended, and its regular declarations signed, by many WSF participant bodies (see this volume)”⁸⁶. The Call formalised itself between WSF2-3 with a Social Movements International Secretariat. But this body, or tendency, is a matter of discomfort for those within the WSF who want to see the Forum as a 'space' rather than a 'movement'.⁸⁷ The WSF is best understood as a world-wide, movement-based, multi-scale, and multi-sited cultural process. The annual

⁸³ ibid

⁸⁴ Samir Amin & B. Founou-Tchuigoua: *Integrated Programmes of Third World Forum For Calendar Years 2002, 2003 and 2004*. Document of Third World Forum. Dakar 2002.

⁸⁵ Teivo Teivainen, <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

⁸⁶ Peter Waterman, 2003: 57. Accessed from: www.choike.org/documentos/wsf_s110_waterman.pdf Retrieved on 01.01.2010

⁸⁷ Social Movements World Network website; Vargas 2003; Whitaker 2003, www.wef.com.tr Retrieved on 01.02.2010

global gathering is a critical node in space and time for the consolidation and articulation of the process on a world scale, but the world process cannot be reduced to it. The annual event is growing exponentially. Hundreds of social forums are appearing world-wide, on every continent and at every scale. As a global process and multifaceted phenomenon, the Social Forum is evolving daily.

“It is characterized by great ongoing creativity and dynamism and some degree of shape-shifting that presents multiple problems of representation and analysis. In this context, Marcuse’s reporting on the Boston SF as an early and major expression of the World Social Forum in the US and reflection on its meaning is welcome. However, like many commentators on the left, Marcuse’s reading of the significance of the SF phenomenon is politically reductionist, focused on questions of strategy and power narrowly understood, the need for linear debate and decision-making and vertically-integrated organization. In Marcuse’s assessment of the political significance of the Social Forum, ‘major transformative change’ is equated with seizing (electorally or otherwise) state power at the national scale”⁸⁸.

If Social Forums (or ‘social movements’) are not oriented to this outcome, then there is no question of ‘transformative social change’ on their horizon. Secondly, their political efficacy is grounded in the capacity to produce a common platform. Thirdly, there is a single system of oppression which unifies all issues and struggles. In Whitaker’s words, the Social Forum is ‘a grand experiment,’ the outcomes of which are uncertain and which needs time to unfold. But what is indisputable is that the Social Forum is already producing historically-unprecedented political convergence and capacity to act on a world scale, notably without benefit of common platform or Leninist organization.⁸⁹

3.1. Background of WSF

⁸⁸ Janet Conway 2007 18

⁸⁹ Janet Conway, 2005: 425–8

“Rallying around the clarion call of “Another World is possible”, the WSF has placed social justice, international solidarity, gender equality, peace and defense of the environment on the agenda of the world’s people. From Port Alegre to Mumbai to Bamako to Caracas, Karachi and now Nairobi, the forces and the contingents of the WSF have collectively expanded the democratic spaces of those seeking concrete, sustainable and progressive alternatives to imperialist globalization.”⁹⁰

Early in 1998, the proposal for a Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) was made public. It was to be signed by the worlds wealthiest countries, then to be "proposed" to - in practice, imposed on - the rest of the countries in the world. The agreement had been discussed in secret in the OECD, the intention being for it to become a kind of World Constitution for Capital, which would give capital all the rights and almost no duties - especially in Third World countries where the "investments" would be made. The French newspaper Le Monde Diplomatique published a first exposé prepared in the United States by the "Public Citizens" movement led by Ralph Nader, in an article by Lori Wallach, a lawyer with the movement.⁹¹

The WSF is an international PLATFORM that is an open meeting place whose groups and movements of civil society opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialisation, but engaged in building a planetary society centered on the human person, come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective actions. The necessary search for common actions and strategies are carried out through creative and steady dialogue among the social movements themselves, by identifying common objectives, by creating robust tissue of common propositions that value the identities of each and every subject involved, instead of repealing and diluting them.⁹²

⁹⁰ Muhunyu, 2007. Accessed from <http://www.necofa.org/235.0.html> Retrived on 01.01.2010

⁹¹ Francisco Whitaker, 2004. World Social Forum: Origins and Aims (http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=2_1&cd_language=2) Retrieved on 01.01.2010

⁹² Muhunyu, 2007. Accessed from <http://www.necofa.org/235.0.html> Retrived on 01.01.2010

“There is no doubt that Africa is among the principle victims of capitalist globalization, particularly during the decisive moments of colonial expansion that took place from the 16th to the 18th century and during the world colonization that started in 1980’s”⁹³.

“The outcry at the absurdities contained in the agreement led to the emergence of a social movement in protest, causing France to withdraw from the negotiations in late 1998 and finally preventing the agreement from being signed. One of the organizations to spur this mobilization was ATTAC - at first the Association for a Tobin Tax for the Aid of Citizens, and now the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens - that was starting to take shape in France at the time, also following a proposal in this direction by *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Today the association has some 20,000 of supporters all over France and has produced ATTACs in other countries round the world, including Brazil. The association is working to put into effect Economics Nobel laureate James Tobin’s proposal for a tax on speculative capital movements as a way of controlling their present absolute freedom to circulate worldwide, with the consequences we all know so well. From the interactions these events helped to trigger everywhere among those who refuse to accept the scenario of a world wholly controlled by the interests of capital, a number of different forms of opposition to this type of globalization began to organize. Those that gained most fame by virtue of their media repercussion were the protests in Seattle against the WTO, in Washington against the IMF and the World Bank and, more recently, those in Prague, which led the government representatives gathered there to cut short their meeting one day ahead of schedule. Now, for a good twenty years, the owners of the world had been meeting in a Forum they called the World Economic Forum, which they held in Davos, a small, luxury ski resort in Switzerland. Once a year - in addition to the regional meetings that it has also begun to organize - this group (that today is a major corporation) currently gathers together all those able to pay 20,000 dollars to hear and talk to the leading thinkers at the

⁹³ Ibid.

service of capital, as well as to hear even guest critics of globalization, invited along to lend legitimacy to the Forum”.⁹⁴

The overall theme of the 7th edition of WSF in Nairobi (first one to be held in Africa and only second time outside its birthplace Brazil) was “**People’s Struggle, People’s Alternatives**” and included a variety of activities and events that included congregating, conversing, seminars, workshops, “talk-outs”, marching, singing, laughing, dancing, networking and strategizing with sisters and brothers, friends and neighbours, comrades and colleagues from five continents, across the oceans, mountains, deserts and rivers and our 140 countries. Against this precarious background the WSF process brought together favorable balances of social forces to bear on the social transformation energies of the African movements in solidarity with fraternal actors from the rest of the world. The resultant synergy from the event included:⁹⁵

- Dialogue among progressive social movements and intellectuals
- Proposals for the new strategies for revolutionary engagement with neo-liberal globalization
- Proposals for new strategies for revolutionary social movements
- Sharing of information and experiences
- Concerted efforts aimed at crafting alternatives for social transformation

3.2. Governor of WSF

Naomi Klein characterized the organizational structure of the first World Social Forum as “so opaque that it was nearly impossible to figure out how decisions were

⁹⁴ Francisco Whitaker, 2004. World Social Forum: Origins and Aims (http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=2_1&cd_language=2) Retrieved on 01.01.2010

⁹⁵ <http://www.necofa.org/235.0.html> Retrieved on 17.01.2010

made”.⁹⁶ Similar criticisms have been made by many others in almost all annual editions of the WSF main event. “Even if according to the WSF Charter of Principles the forum “does not constitute a locus of power to be disputed by the participants”, disputes of power do exist. The formal decision-making power of the WSF process has been mainly in the hands of the Organizing Committee, consisting since its foundation of the Central Trade Union Confederation CUT (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*), the Movement of Landless Rural Workers MST (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*) and six smaller Brazilian civil society organizations”.⁹⁷ In terms of sheer numbers of affiliates, there is a huge difference between the two big ones and the others. “In the decision-making process within the Organizing Committee, the CUT and MST have generally acted “generously” towards the smaller organizations. In this sense, the disparity of resources has generally not translated into significant disparities in the decision-making power. The disparity in resources should, however, not be exaggerated”⁹⁸.

“Even if much smaller, some of the participating NGOs may have better access to financial resources than especially the MST. The role of IBASE, a Rio-based socially engaged research institute, has been particularly important in fund-raising for the WSF. 2001”⁹⁹. According to Cândido Grzybowski, director of IBASE, the idea to create an international council emerged in Porto Alegre on the last day of the first World Social Forum.¹⁰⁰ During the following months, the Organizing Committee made a list of organizations that were invited to the foundation event in São Paulo. As of June 2003 the Council nominally consists of 113 organizations -including the eight members of the Organizing Committee-, though in practice many of them have not actively participated in the process..

⁹⁶ Naomi Klein, 2001 quoted in Teivainen, 2003 http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-world/article_1342.jsp Retrieved on 01.01.2010

⁹⁷ Teivainen, <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on on 01.01.2010

⁹⁸ Teivainen, 2003 http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-world/article_1342.jsp Retrieved on 01.01.2010

⁹⁹ Teivainen, 2003 www.choike.org/documentos/wsf_s303_teivainen.pdf Retrieved 01.01.2010

¹⁰⁰ Teivainen, 2003 http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-world/article_1342.jsp Retrieved on 01.01.2010

“Most IC members come from the Americas and Western Europe though many have activities also in other parts of the world. Organizations based in Asia and Africa include the Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA), Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde (ENDA) and Palestinian NGO Network”¹⁰¹.

“According to some definitions the IC member should be regional or global networks rather than purely national organizations, but this criterion has not been strictly followed. Apart from the proper members, there are 15 observer organizations, mostly the representatives of regional and thematic social forums in various parts of the world. The division of labor between the International Council and the Brazilian Organizing Committee has been obscure. During the first WSF the former did not exist.”¹⁰²

When founded, the International Council was assigned an essentially advisory role. “Before the founding meeting in São Paulo, the Organizing Committee had drafted its name as “International Advisory Council”. The ambiguity of the relationship between the Organizing Committee and the International Council was already present in the São Paulo meeting when some delegates of the invited organizations raised the question “advising whom?” During the meeting, it was decided that the term “advisory” be deleted from the name”¹⁰³. The International Council has gained increasing importance in paper and, to a lesser extent, also in practice. Even if some observers have characterized it as “barely a rubber stamp”¹⁰⁴, it has certainly played a role. For example, in at least two meetings the Organizing Committee suggested that the WSF main event should be held bi-annually rather than annually, and in both cases the International Council decided to continue with the annual meetings.

The role of the International Council should not be exaggerated either. It is fair to emphasize its role in giving international legitimacy to the Brazilian organizers,¹⁰⁵

101 ibid

102 ibid.

103 ibid.

104 Albert Michael, 2003 quoted in ibid.

105 ibid

though this has not been its only role. Especially after it was decided that the main annual event of the WSF process in 2004 would take place in India, the linkage between the International Council and the organizers both in Brazil and India has become more complex. “A typical mechanism for making decisions in the meetings of the International Council is that the Organization Committee, always present in the meetings, submits a proposal on an issue. Then the International Council debates the issue. The debate has normally been presided by the Organization Committee, though other International Council members have also been given responsibilities in the running of the council meetings. In case no clear consensus emerges, the Organizing Committee will have a separate meeting and reconsider its original proposal. In some cases, it will then (typically on the second day of the two-day meeting) present new proposal where the earlier discussion will have been taken into account”¹⁰⁶. Normally, the new proposal will carry the day and most everyone agrees, more or less.

“The underlying assumption in this working method is that the World Social Forum is not a deliberative body or actor that would take political stands and thereby need rigorous decision-making procedures”¹⁰⁷. Until now the system has worked relatively well, making decisions through what some of the Brazilian organizers call *construção*, constructing them in a critical debate and sometimes laborious consensus building. The International Council is neither supposed to have mechanisms for disputing representation, nor for voting.¹⁰⁸ The only time there has been a vote was when in its first meeting it had to be decided whether the following meeting would take place somewhere in Europe or in Dakar. Dakar was voted for by the majority. The most difficult decision of the International Council thus far was made in January 2003 when the council decided to organize the WSF 2004 in India. Even if there was formally a consensus, a small minority strongly argued against the decision until the end. The strongest opposition came from some delegates from Cuba.

¹⁰⁶ Teivainen, 2003 www.choike.org/documentos/wsf_s303_teivainen.pdf Retrieved 01.01.2010

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*

¹⁰⁸ http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/eng/qconselho_1.asp Retrieved on 11.09.2009

The main composition of the International Council and its operational methods are likely to experience transformations. The selection of the founding members of the International Council, mostly through invitations by the Organizing Committee, was reasonably easy when the overall process was still known to only relatively few networks. In the future, when there will be more groups interested in joining the International Council, more explicit selection procedures will, I believe, have to be established. There are indications that the question of fair representation will become more controversial in the WSF process. Following its own plan drafted in April¹⁰⁹ 2002, the Brazilian Organizing Committee has been transformed into the Secretariat. The ambiguity of the relationship with the International Council has, however, not been totally overcome. In some documents the renamed body is (self-)defined as “Secretariat of the International Council”, whereas others refer to “Secretariat of the World Social Forum”.

“The decision to organize the WSF 2004 in India will imply new changes for the governing bodies. What is more or less clear at the moment is that Indian organizations now constitute a new organizing committee. It is much less clear what the composition and the role of the organizing committee and the secretariat will be in the next two years. The decision to organize the WSF 2004 in India was made simultaneously with the decision to organize the WSF 2005 back in Porto Alegre. It would probably have been impossible to reach the decision on going to India in 2004 without at the same time agreeing that the WSF 2005 will take place in Porto Alegre”¹¹⁰.

“The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for ordinary people to get a platform for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements opposed to a world dominated by capital and any form of imperialism”¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.socialniprova.info/article1702.html> Retrieved on 11.09.2009

¹¹⁰ Teivainen 2003. <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on 12.09.2009

¹¹¹ <http://www.socialniprova.info/article1702.html> Retrieved on 17.11.2009

“Activities during the World Social Forum are self-organized by community based organizations (CBOs), social movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from more than 100 countries. This means that most activities (seminars, workshops, performances, exhibitions etc.) during the Forum are not organized by the WSF Secretariat but by hundreds of different organizations from all around the globe. The task of the WSF Secretariat is ‘merely’ to coordinate these activities and to provide the venue and facilities as well as information to the public”¹¹².

“Various International Council members repeatedly expressed fears that if the WSF leaves Porto Alegre indefinitely, and the next venues do not meet the expectations, the whole process might die out. Already fixing the place of the 2005 forum can be considered a guarantee against the unlikely eventuality that the process to move the Forum to India were to result in a catastrophe. In that case, 2004 could later be seen as a year in which there was no “real” World Social Forum. Some of the Brazilian organizers have in fact been arguing that the main global event should not be organized annually but perhaps every two years”¹¹³.

“In any case, it has not yet been defined whether the return to Porto Alegre in 2005 will mean that the old organizing committee consisting of the eight Brazilian groups will be reconstituted as the new organizing committee. One aspect of the decision-making that has been somewhat neglected in the WSF process is the possibilities information technology could imply. Of course, much of the informal decisionmaking and strategic planning of the forum takes place through e-mail. The organizers have, however, been reluctant to explore ways in which cyberspace could be used in organizing more formal decision-making processes. Peter Waterman has argued insightfully and provocatively that the WSF “*uses* the media, culture and cyberspace but it does not *think* of itself in primarily cultural/communicational terms, nor does it *live* fully within this increasingly central and infinitely expanding universe”¹¹⁴.

¹¹² *ibid*

¹¹³ Teivainen 2003. <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on 12.09.2009

¹¹⁴ *ibid*

He sees the WSF as “a shrine of the written and spoken word”¹¹⁵ In the new suggestions for rules and procedures of the International Council that will be discussed and possibly decided on in the next IC meeting scheduled for June 2003, it is mentioned that the use of cyberspace in the decision-making should be at least considered. There are people who consider increasing cyberspace use only to play in the hands (and pockets) of Bill Gates and the like. Some feel that increased reliance on the Internet could marginalize groups that have limited or no access to the Internet. On the other hand, considering the costs for a poor organization in the Global South to fly someone into a meeting in another continent may certainly be higher than taking part in a cybermeeting through the Internet.¹¹⁶

3.3. History

The first World Social Forum (WSF) meeting took place in the city of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, between January 25 and 30, 2001, aiming to oppose the World Economic Forum in Davos. This Economic Forum has played a strategic role in the formulation of the thoughts for those who promote and defend the neoliberal policies all around the world since 1971. Its organizational base is a Swiss foundation, which works as an ONU consultant and is financed by more than 1,000 international companies.¹¹⁷

“The WSF 2001 Organizing Committee was formed by eight Brazilian entities: Abong, Attac, CBJP, Cives, CUT, Ibase, MST and Social Network of Justice and Human Rights. Also an office has been created in Sao Paulo (Brazil), which is responsible for supporting the WSF process, the WSF International Council (IC) and its commissions, as well as the organizing committees of the annual WSF events”¹¹⁸. Besides integrating the IC and its commissions, the eight entities now integrate and give name to the so called Collective Responsible by the WSF Office in Brazil.

¹¹⁵ Waterman in Teivainen Available from <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on 12.09.2009

¹¹⁶ ibid

¹¹⁷ http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=2&cd_language=2 Retrieved on 17.09.2009

¹¹⁸ ibid

3.3.1. WSF 2001

The first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre proved to be exhilarating and relatively disorganized, the dominant voice was clearly that of protest against neo-liberalism. Its main achievement was to make a case against the Davos Forum that “another world is possible”. It struggled at first with constructive debate, but they got gradually more important during the following editions. It also became more evident that it was difficult for any single individual to get a global view of the world social forum. So many networks were participating, so many issues were discussed, and experiences and practices told, that one had to choose.¹¹⁹

“The WSF 2001, which took place in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), Brazil, between January 25 and 30, 2001, had count on the participation of approximately 20.000 people, having about 4.700 ones as delegates of many entities from 117 different countries. Also the press made a substantial presence accrediting 1,870 ones”¹²⁰.

In the WSF 2001, diverse activities – conferences, seminars, workshops – developed around four thematic areas¹²¹:

- Production of Wealth and Social Reproduction
- Access to the Wealth and Sustainability
- Asserting Civil Society and the Public Realm
- Political Power and Ethics in the New Society

“The realization of this first forum evidenced the capacity of mobilization of the civil society facing a methodology characterized by the guarantee of diversity and co-responsibility in the process of construction of such event. By the success of the first event, it was decided WSF process had to continue. Searching for this, the WSF

¹¹⁹ http://www.alliance21.org/2003/article.php3?id_article=247 Retrieved on 17.09.2009

¹²⁰ http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=2&cd_language=2 Retrieved on 17.09.2009

¹²¹ *ibid*

Organizing Committee proposed the establishment of a Charter of Principles for the WSF could be recognized as a space and process which permanently looks for the construction of worldwide alternatives”¹²².

“The creation of the CI expresses the conception of the World Social Forum in building a democratic and open space of meetings to favour the construction of an international movement capable of joining alternatives to the unique neoliberal thinking. The action of the International Council promoted the dialogue among the organizations, both at Brazilian national and international levels, and supported the organization of committees for national mobilization, thematic and regional forums, and the organization of the global events in 2002, 2003 and 2004”¹²³.

3.3.2. WSF 2002

“The WSF 2002 took place in Porto Alegre, between January 31 and February 05 2002, accounting 12.274 delegates representing 123 countries. The Press showed up with 3.356 journalists from 1,066 media vehicles, whose 1,866 Brazilians and 1,490 foreigners. The number of participants exceeded the expectations, with figures of more than 50.000 people in the total amount”¹²⁴.

“Presenting the same topics of the first forum, this one held 96 seminars, 27 conferences and 622 self-governing activities (i.e., seminars and workshops organized by the entities participating on the WSF)”¹²⁵. There have sometimes been tensions between the WSF governance bodies and the organizers of the other forums. For example, the Italian organizers of the European Social Forum 2002 wanted to use a declaration of social movements drafted by movements that participated in the WSF as

¹²² ibid
¹²³ ibid
¹²⁴ ibid
¹²⁵ ibid

the foundation of their regional forum. The Brazilian Organizing Committee, however, insisted in the Barcelona meeting of the International Council in April 2002 that the Charter of Principles is the only official basis for such events that are organized within the WSF umbrella.¹²⁶ A further debate emerged in the International Council meeting of Bangkok in August 2002 when the Brazilians were strongly opposed to the plans of the Italians to invite political parties to take officially part in the European Social Forum. According to the Charter of Principles, the WSF is a “non-party context” and political parties are not supposed to directly take part in the activities. The Italian delegates present in the Bangkok meeting responded by accusing the Brazilian Organizing Committee of hypocrisy.

“The fact that the Workers Party PT has been visibly present in all Porto Alegre forums has often been considered to be problematic in terms of the Charter of Principles. The Italians claimed that the open violation of the Charter by the Brazilians had been always accepted by the participants in the WSF and therefore the Brazilians should not get upset if minor political parties play a small role in a regional forum. Another controversy was related to the plans to organize a social forum event in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2002.

The event was to focus on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), coinciding with a FTAA ministerial meeting”.¹²⁷ During early 2002 the Quito event was in the semiofficial list of WSF events, but by mid-year it had been taken off the list. There was no public debate that I would be aware of on the issue, but one of the main reasons was the insistence of some International Council members that the Quito event would be too focused on one particular issue (FTAA) and with too narrow organizational basis. The event was organized, and many of the slogans and other

¹²⁶ Francisco Whitaker <http://www.choike.org/2009/eng/informes/3833.html> Retrieved on 10.01.2010

¹²⁷ Teivainen, <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on on 09.01.2010

symbols made it in many ways part of the WSF process even if it was not in the semiofficial list.

3.3.3. WSF 2003

“It also became evident with the third World Social Forum in 2003, as the process had brought 100,000 people in Porto Alegre that its growth accounted for a geographic spreading of the Forum, no single place being able to contain everybody, and for different levels of participation : some people where content to listen to anti- or soon alter-globalization stars, others where involved with their networks in workshops and seminars, which could be opportunities for denunciation, or for building common ground for action, many would also participate individually to workshops where they could simply discuss with other delegates, while young people at the Youth Camp, in numbers that gave nightmares to security services, but well self-organized, would have their own events, near the tents where they slept”¹²⁸.

In the meantime, the process had spread at continental, national and even local levels. Hundreds of cities or regions have had their local social forums, all continents (except Oceania) hold an annual event, and other forums are called "thematic forums". But some networks leaders, civil society celebrities, and simple participants concerned by the building of a process able to challenge corporate globalization began to realize that the growth of the World Social Forum presented a set of contradictions limiting its efficiency as a tool for this process. The most urgent challenge seemed to "globalize the world social forum" by moving out of Brazil to another part of the developing world, in order to ensure a wider participations of delegates from other countries and socio-cultural contexts.¹²⁹

The scale of the event was considerably larger than the previous years. Over 30'000 delegates (twice as many as in 2002) and around 100'000 participants in total

¹²⁸ http://www.alliance21.org/2003/article.php3?id_article=247 Retrived on 10.11.2009

¹²⁹ *ibid*

(NGO delegates and other participants) gathered in Porto Alegre. NGO delegates representing 5'000 NGOs and 121 countries participated and organised workshops and roundtables, whilst in total 100'000 people gathered to march in the streets, in protest against the war and globalisation.¹³⁰

The city of Porto Alegre was chosen because of its specific mode of administration, much more participatory than all other cities in the world, and therefore, it is characterized as the UN's model of good government. Porto Alegre should therefore remain the symbolic centre of debates. When thinking of Porto Alegre and the WSF, the people of the world should now identify issues such as participatory democracy, social economics as opposed to neo-liberal globalisation, and the search for alternatives to war.

“In 2003, in the core of the activities organized were included an amount of 10 conferences, 22 testimonials, 4 dialogue and controversy round table and 36 panel debate debates. Alone, these core activities gathered 392 speakers in the conferences from many countries, a number which is trice as larger as the one in 2001. The latter one brought a total of 104 speakers from networks, organizations and social movements from around the world”¹³¹.

The number of self-governing activities increased from 400 in the WSF 2001 to 1,300 in 2003.¹³² These activities handled the following topics:

- Sustainable and democratic development
- Values and principles, human rights, diversity and equality
- Media, culture and alternatives to the homogenization and mercantilism
- Political power, civil society and democracy
- Democratic world order, fight against militarization and peace promotion

¹³⁰ http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=2&cd_language=2 Retrieved on on 10.11.2009

¹³¹ http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=2&cd_language=2 Retrieved on on 10.01.2010

¹³² *ibid*

As a part of the re-thinking of the structure of the WSF process, the International Committee has decided to decentralise the WSF every other year, calling upon India to host the gathering in 2004. The International Committee will act as a Secretariat for the WSF, this entails thinking strategically and adopting a critical viewpoint. Four main guidelines have been laid down¹³³ :

- the current trend of globalisation is not sustainable;
- an alternative globalisation is under way;
- dialogue between the two kinds of globalisation (economic vs. political; corporate-led vs. society-led globalisation) is pressing and must not be postponed;
- responsible leaders of the WSF will be judged on the basis of their organisation skills, performance of the WSF and the way they are able to fulfil the objectives of the WSF, i.e. the ability of the new structure (world social network, initiated by the landless farmers and CUT, both co-organisers of the WSF) to lead to actual decision-making, and to articulate and drive a ‘radical, democratic, internationalist, anti-imperialist agenda’.

In essence, the International Committee must serve as a reference and as a tool for international mobilisation.

The third edition of the WSF represents an important moment in the movement’s history for the institutionalisation of the parallel forums accompanying the WSF. One would not speak of an ‘institutionalisation’ for the WSF itself, which would be counter its nature, but indeed, the institutionalisation of regional or thematic forums achieve more precise goals than the WSF itself. Roberto Savio, member of the WSF’s International Committee, calls for smaller, more in-depth forums. Otherwise, the lack of methodology and systematisation weakens Porto Alegre’s WSF.¹³⁴

¹³³ <http://www.ukabc.org/wsf2003.htm> Retrieved on on 10.01.2010

¹³⁴ <http://www.ukabc.org/wsf2003.htm> Retrieved on on 10.01.2010

Debates this year were organised under the headings of the following central issues¹³⁵:

- Democratic and sustainable development;
- Principles and values, human rights, diversity and equality;
- Media, culture and counter-culture;
- Political power, civil society and democracy;
- A democratic world order and the anti-war and peace struggle.

3.3.4. WSF 2004

“In 2004, for the very first time the World Social forum took place outside Brazil. The decision was taken by the International Council as part of the process of promoting the WSF actual internationalization. The place chosen was Mumbai, India, and the date: January 16 to 21, 2004. During 2003 happened the constitution of many [Indian bodies](#) responsible by the preparation of the facilities for WSF 2004: Indian General Council, Indian Work Committee (ILC), Indian Organizing Committee (IOC), and Mumbai Organizing Committee (MOC)”¹³⁶.

“The WSF 2004 counted on the presence of 74.126 participants, representing 1,653 organizations from 117 countries. From this number 60.224 ones were Indian. At the Intercontinental Youth Camp were registered 2.723 people”¹³⁷.

“More than 800 volunteers from 20 countries participated on the WSF 2004. They were 180 interpreters and translators from Argentina, Brazil, India, USA, France, Spain, United Kingdom, Belgium, Switzerland, Sri-Lanka, Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan, Korea and Palestine. During the forum, consecutive interpretation and translation were

¹³⁵ [ibid](#)

¹³⁶ http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=2&cd_language=2 Retrieved on on 10.01.2010

¹³⁷ [ibid](#)

arranged for free by an international network named Babels. About 3.200 journalists, representing 644 press vehicles, covered this WSF”¹³⁸.

“The program of activities under responsibility of the Indian Organizing Committee presented 13 events of different shapes: panel debates, round tables, conferences and public meetings. A new point in the methodology of the WSF process was the inclusion in the program of large self-governed activities by the organizations registered in the WSF, like: panel debates, conferences and round tables. In the total amount, 35 such events were organized. Smaller self-governing activities, like seminars, workshop, meetings, etc, had a strong presence in the WSF: 1,203 events”¹³⁹.

The activities were organized in the thematic areas¹⁴⁰:

- Militarization, war and peace
- Information, knowledge and culture
- Environment and economics
- Exclusion, rights and equality

Transversal themes:

- Imperialist globalization
- Patriarchy
- Castes, racism and social exclusion
- Religious sectarianism, identity politics and fundamentalism (communalism)
- Militarization and peace

3.3.5. WSF 2005

The V World Social Forum took place in Porto Alegre from January 26 to 31 2005. At the march that initiated the Forum more than 200 thousand people took part. Totally, there were 155 thousand registered participants, 35 of them as part of the Youth

¹³⁸ *ibid*

¹³⁹ *ibid*

¹⁴⁰ *ibid*

Camp and 6, 823 from the press. Around 6,872 organizations from 151 countries were involved in 2,500 activities distributed among the 11 thematic terrains of World Social Territory. Most part of the delegations was from Brazil, Argentina, the United States, Uruguay and France. January 29 and 30 were the busiest days; 500 thousand people passed by the World Social Territory, according to the numbers presented by the Military Brigade¹⁴¹.

Around 3,100 volunteers collaborated in the event, in areas such as translation, culture, communication, logistics and general services, web maintenance etc. 533 interpreters from 30 countries also participated. Sixteen languages were translated during the V FSM: Portuguese, English, French, Spanish, Arab, Japanese, Hebrew, German, Italian Korean, guarani, Hindu, quechua, uolof (Africa), bahasa (Indonesia), Russian and libras (brazilian language of signs).¹⁴²

“It was opened to organisations and individuals and a new perspective and methodological approach was adopted to increase collaboration and dialogue during the event. The goal was to avoid repetitive activities on similar issues that were developed independently of each other. This initiative started from the premise that it is not possible to build another world without combining efforts, building alternatives and interlinking common actions and campaigns”¹⁴³.

Those who participated in the previous WSFs have contributed to create a new type of organisation, which is more a process than an institution. While being extraordinarily ambitious in its diversity, in the wide range of topics it deals with and in the activities it holds, the Forum is also consciously modest with regard to its role: its Charter of Principles clearly specifies that it is not the only space of convergence.

This is just one more space within a broader process of global struggles and its

¹⁴¹ http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=14_5&cd_language=2 retrieved 10.01.2010

¹⁴² http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=14_5&cd_language=2 retrieved 10.01.2010

¹⁴³ <http://www.choike.org/2009/eng/informes/2334.html> Retrieved on 10.01.2010

function is to offer a way by means of which people who share common concerns and believe that "another world is possible" could jump over geographic, cultural and political differences and could freely develop new plans, strategies, initiatives and organisations.

It is a space for democratic debate of ideas, reflective thinking, formulation of proposals, exchange of experiences and interlinking of social movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society organisations. After the first world meeting held in 2001, it became a permanent process of seeking and building alternatives to neoliberal policies.¹⁴⁴

WSF is subdivided into eight open WGs (Work Groups): Realms, Solidary Popular Economy, Environment and Sustainability, Culture, Translation, Communication, Mobilization and Free Software (articulated with the Communication WG). Latter on, a ninth WG has been created: Program. "Building the program was possible by following a new methodology, which allowed extending the convergence, the multiplication of the dialogues during the event and the prevention of the unarticulated duplication of activities about the same topic. The program of this meeting was built from the self-governing activities proposed by the organizations participating on the WSF 2005"¹⁴⁵.

The new methodology approved by the International Council in April 2004 gave as first concrete step the realization of a Thematic Consultation, a questionnaire widely divulged that tried to identify what contests/fights, questions, problems, proposals and challenges that many of the organizations participating on the WSF considered to be listed in the roadmap of WSF 2005 and what activities were intended to be held in Porto Alegre. The commissions of Methodology and Content from the International Council

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*

¹⁴⁵ http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=2&cd_language=2 Retrieved on on 10.01.2010

analyzed the answers, what resulted in 11 thematic realms that organized all of the proposed activities for the WSF 2005¹⁴⁶:

1. Asserting and defending the common properties of the Land and the peoples – as an alternative to mercantilism and to the control of transnational companies.
2. Art and Creation: building the cultures of resistance of the peoples
3. Communication: practices contra-hegemonic, rights and alternatives
4. Defending diversity, plurality and identity
5. Human Rights and dignity for a fair and equal world
6. Sovereign economies by and for the peoples – against the neoliberal capitalism
7. Ethics, Cosmo visions and spiritualities – resistances and challenges for a new world
8. Social fights and democratic alternatives - against neoliberal domination
9. Peace and demilitarization – Fight against war, free commerce and the debt
10. Autonomous Thinking, recovering and socialization of knowledge and technologies
11. Building a new international democratic order and integrating the peoples

It were also identified 5 transversal themes¹⁴⁷

1. Social emancipation and political range of the contests (fights)
2. Fight against patriarchal capitalism
3. Fight against racism
4. Genres
5. Diversity

“In the March that started the WSF 2005, were present more than 200 thousand people. The total count was 155 thousand registered participants, 35 thousand ones being from the Youth Camp and 6.823 being communicators. About 6.872 organizations from 151 countries get involved in 2.500 activities in the World Social Territory. The biggest delegations came from Brazil, Argentina, United States, Uruguay and France. The peak rates of the crowd were reached in January 29 and 30: 500 thousand people

¹⁴⁶ ibid

¹⁴⁷ ibid

circulated on the World Social Territory, according to figures from the Military Brigade. About 3.100 volunteers collaborated on the realization of the meeting in the areas of translation, culture, communication, logistics and services, network support and construction, etc. From 30 countries 533 interpreters (Babels) participated translating from and to sixteen languages during the V WSF: Portuguese, English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, Hebraic, German, Italian, Korean, Guarani, Hindi, Quechua, Uolof (Africa), Bahasa (Indonesia), Russian and Libras (Brazilian Signals Language – mainly used by deaf people)”¹⁴⁸.

The International Council of the Forum has decided that next year's edition will be realized in a spread out manner, in different places in the world. With this, the WSF ensures its commitment with its Letter of Principles, seeking for a permanent process of searching and building new alternatives, which are not limited to the events proposed.

3.3.6. WSF 2006

“The WSF 2006 edition was polycentric, i.e., it took place in a decentralized way in different places around the world. Three cities held the WSF 2006: Bamako (Mali – Africa), between January 19 and 23, Caracas (Venezuela – America) and Karachi (Pakistan – Asia), between March 24 and 29. The Karachi edition was originally planned to happen together with the Venezuelan event. However, the earthquake that shook the country in October 2005 caused the event to be two months postponed”¹⁴⁹.

“Like in the previous events the WSF polycentric program was built in a participative way, according to the general methodological recommendations from the International Council, via consultations to elect the preferential themes for each event. Each of the polycentric events had its own methodology and program”¹⁵⁰. In the programs it was enforced the realization of self-governing activities, i.e., proposed by

¹⁴⁸ ibid

¹⁴⁹ ibid

¹⁵⁰ ibid

organizations participating in the VI WSF. The registrations were made in one single site for the three events¹⁵¹ .

“For the event in Caracas a thematic consultation were realized between May and the end of July, 2005. The results were analyzed in a meeting of the Americas’ Hemispheric Council, which took place in August 14 and 17, in Caracas (Venezuela), and defined six thematic areas and two transversal themes. In Bamako and Karachi the consultation started from a list of themes previously defined by the bodies of these forums”¹⁵² .

3.3.7. WSF 2007

“The next edition of the WSF will took place at the African continent, in Nairobi, Kenya, between January 20 and 27, 2007. A first meeting among the WSF International Council, its commissions and entities comprised in the local organizing committee and the African council was realized in March 2006. During this meeting it was defined the realization of a wide consultation before the process of registering activities for the WSF.”¹⁵³

3.3.8. WSF 2009

“From January 27 to February 1, over 100,000 people from around the world participated in the World Social Forum (WSF) held in Belém, Brazil, at the mouth of the Amazon River. The venues for this year's WSF were held in the Universidade Federal Rural da Amazônia (UFRA) and the Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA). Unfortunately, the universities were far apart, requiring people to take buses, taxis, or boats to the many workshops and talks. Despite the heat, humidity, rain, and travel

¹⁵¹ www.wsf2006.org Retrieved on 11.01.2010

¹⁵² http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/index.php?cd_language=2&id_menu Retrieved on 11.01.2010

¹⁵³ *ibid*

distances, WSF 2009 brought together large contingents of Indigenous Peoples from the region with youth, women, social, environmental, and climate justice activists”¹⁵⁴.

At the opening, more than 1,000 Indigenous Peoples from around the world sent an urgent message with a huge human banner that read in Portuguese: Salve a Amazonia (Save the Amazon).¹⁵⁵

“The largest event, however, was a meeting with leftist presidents Evo Morales of Bolivia, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Rafael Correa of Ecuador, Fernando Lugo of Paraguay and Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. While many lauded this event, to some this was a contradiction to the spirit of social and Indigenous Peoples' movements that are looking for a more autonomous approach based in self-governance”¹⁵⁶.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's decision to attend the WSF in Belém on Jan. 29 and 30, instead of the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos, Switzerland, reflects a change in the alignment of forces.¹⁵⁷

The WSF originated as a rival assembly, to protest the WEF's policies and propose alternatives. In January 2007, Lula chose to attend the WEF in Davos and skip the 7th WSF in Nairobi, Kenya. It was a gravy-train time of strong global economic growth, soaring commodity prices and plentiful foreign investment in Brazil. The markets seemed to promise prosperity for all. Now, given the economic, energy, environmental and food crises, the ideas of the WSF appear to be more attractive and realistic.¹⁵⁸

The motto of the World Social Forums is, "Another World is Possible." Prior to the beginning of the 2009 WSF, organizers stated, "The Pan-Amazon will be the

¹⁵⁴ www.zcommunications.org/the-world-social-forum-2009-by-orin-langelle.pdf Retrieved on 12.01.2010

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*

¹⁵⁶ *ibid*

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.ipsterraviva.net/tv/wsfbrazil2009/currentNew.aspx?new=1259> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

¹⁵⁸ http://www.wired.com/beyond_the_beyond/2009/01/meanwhile-out-i/ Retrieved on 12.01.2010

territory of the 9th edition of the World Social Forum. For six days, Belem, the capital of Para, Brazil...sheltered the greatest anti-globalization event of today and brings together activists from more than 150 countries in a permanent process of mobilization, articulation and search for alternatives for another possible world, free of neoliberal politics and all forms of imperialism."¹⁵⁹.

The choice of Belém, the capital of Pará state and the northeastern gateway to the Amazon jungle region, as this year's WSF venue, indicates emphasis on environmental and climate issues, as well as social concerns, with the participation of poor and ethnically diverse communities living in the world's greatest tropical forest and freshwater reserve. The financial crisis that is causing generalised economic slowdown and, in Brazil and other countries, recession, gives a new dimension to the 9th WSF this year.

The World Social Forum started in 2001 as an initiative "to counter the globalisation that is now in crisis," Grzybowski told IPS¹⁶⁰. "A clearer agenda" on alternative development models should emerge from this meeting in Belém, he predicted. Greater "convergence in the debates" is likely, at a forum that has been trying to overcome excessive fragmentation of ideas and actions for several years, he added.

"Over 100,000 people were expected to participate in close to 2,600 activities in Belém, including seminars, conferences, assemblies, cultural activities, marches and other forms of debate and demonstrations, as well as parallel meetings for local authorities and at the Intercontinental Youth Camp. The forum is to end with a "Day of Alliances," devoted to meetings of coalitions and networks to decide on joint actions. This mechanism is intended to foment links between groups and stimulate active partnerships, an area where little progress was made in previous forums, Grzybowski said".

¹⁵⁹ www.zcommunications.org/the-world-social-forum-2009-by-orin-langelle.pdf Retrieved on 12.01.2010

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.politicalaffairs.net/article/articleview/8093/> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

“This year’s WSF is novel simply because it is taking place in the Amazon jungle region, where environmental issues have global effects because it is the planet's largest reserve of tropical forests, fresh water and biodiversity. In addition, it will be an opportunity for the voices of indigenous people, quilombolas (Afro-Brazilian communities descended from escaped slaves), riverside dwellers, small-scale extractors of natural products like rubber and nuts, and other Amazon peoples to be raised and heard”¹⁶¹.

It will probably be the WSF that is best attended so far by grassroots activists and community members, according to Grzybowski. IBASE studies found a majority of university graduates and young people at previous forums.¹⁶² Amazonian social movements and organisations want to play a "leading role," discussing local models of development and alternatives, rather than just host the forum, Graça Costa, one of the organisers of the WSF in Belém and the national adviser on gender issues for the non-governmental Federation of Organisations for Social and Educational Assistance (FASE), told IPS. The voices of "original peoples," like indigenous communities, will be important, as well as critically questioning the hydroelectric power stations that have major social and environmental impacts on the Amazon region, while the energy they produce goes to outside areas and does not benefit the local population, she said.¹⁶³ The practices of Vale, a giant Brazilian mining company symbolising "the model we do not want," will be called into question, she said. But it is a heavyweight in the national economy as well as in Pará state, so a discussion on its renationalisation, advocated by several movements, will be "very complex," she said.

“The company, formerly known as Companhia Vale do Rio Doce, was privatised in 1997. It exports vast quantities of iron ore, mined in Pará, and supplies a large number of steelworks that are accused of deforesting huge tracts of the eastern Amazon region and exploiting slave labour to produce charcoal. The WSF final assembly in Belém will debate actions to be taken against Vale, which is expanding its aluminium production

¹⁶¹ <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=45494> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

¹⁶² *ibid*

¹⁶³ <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-104478646.html> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

activities, and is planning to build a coal-fired thermoelectric power station in Pará to supply its energy requirements”¹⁶⁴.

At Belém, efforts will also be made to reactivate the Pan Amazon Social Forum, which has been dormant since its fourth meeting in 2005. Jan. 28 will be entirely devoted to the Amazon region and its social movements and organisations. This will incorporate regional issues and processes into the world meeting, said Salette Valesan Camba, a ubiquitous WSF organiser representing the Paulo Freire Institute.¹⁶⁵

“This year, the WSF will make more intensive use of the media in its so-called "expanded Belém," a means of facilitating virtual participation for groups who are unable to be physically present. The process will be "from outside in, and vice versa," sending out information on the activities at Belém and receiving information about events happening all over the world, Valesan said. "There is no evidence that the economic crisis is affecting the number of activists coming to Belém," she said. In her view, the crisis has discredited the World Economic Forum in Davos, so this is "a propitious moment to put alternative proposals into practice."¹⁶⁶

“The World Social Forum has been central to the convergence of both antiglobalization and anti-war movements. The Social Forum is successfully fostering *convergence* among movements world-wide through the promotion of *pluralism*. It is this extraordinary paradox — that embracing diversity is producing unprecedented coordinated action on a global scale — that is key to the generative power of the Social Forum and suggestive of a new democratic politics on a world scale”¹⁶⁷. Increasingly, the power of the Social Forum lies also in its global diffusion as a *process* for the

¹⁶⁴ <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=45494> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

¹⁶⁵ http://www.afrodad.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=334%3Awsf-to-look-at-global-crunch&Itemid=21 Retrieved on 13.01.2010

¹⁶⁶ <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=45494> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

¹⁶⁷ http://www.openspaceforum.net/twiki/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=159

creation of *non-deliberative* political spaces where a wide range of movements converge and where the only requirement is their shared opposition to neoliberalism.¹⁶⁸

Movements, networks and organizations can and do use the space of the Social Forum to advance campaign-organizing and action-planning in the most concrete ways. But the nondeliberative character of the gathering as a whole preserves it as a space of mutual encounter and learning, of multiple discourses, modes and activities, rather than centring on a single, deliberative and, by definition, unitary political process. Whitaker has argued vigorously for the WSF as ‘open space’ against those who, like Marcuse, would turn it into a ‘movement’. In Whitaker’s view, they risk that which is most powerful and creative about the process — its openness, its horizontal structures and self-activity. A movement, in his view, implies definition of strategies, formulation of programs, assigned divisions of labour and pyramid-like structures. The WSF exists to incubate and nurture plural and diverse movements opposed to neoliberalism, *not to become the movement itself* — a critical distinction. It promotes the formation of movements and the generation of alternatives *in and through* its open space methodology¹⁶⁹.

The power and potential of the Social Forum as a new political form and process, according to Conway¹⁷⁰, rests on four features: its character as a non-deliberative yet highly participatory and inclusive ‘space of spaces’ with multiple centres; its global diffusion as a form and method through the proliferation of local and regional social forums; the increasing internationalization, inter- and multi-culturalism of the global process, signalled by the WSF’s move from Brazil to India in 2004; and a growing recognition of multiplicity, of diversity and pluralism as organizing principles in fostering a new politics for a new world with the space for many worlds within it. These features have emerged in practice and become definitive even as their significance can

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20427383.800-ancient-amazon-civilisation-laid-bare-by-felled-forest.html> Retrieved on 13.0 1.2010

¹⁶⁹ F, Whitaker, 2004

¹⁷⁰ J, Conway, 2003

only as yet be dimly perceived. Their possible meanings depend on how future political practice, experimentation and debates over the future of the WSF unfold¹⁷¹.

“The central claim of the WSF is that another world is possible. As important is the WSF’s explicit resistance to the hegemony of any single way of thinking. In its foundational valuing of diversity and participation, the WSF is helping knit together a worldwide movement premised on the values of solidarity and dialogue in the midst of infinite diversity. In the evolving practice of the World Social Forum, a new democratic imaginary — post-liberal and post-Marxist — is taking shape and, with it, other possible futures are coming into view”¹⁷².

Another globalization is an expression that has been emphasized by some of the key organizers of the Porto Alegre meetings.¹⁷³ Despite their insistence, the mass media in many parts of Latin America often talks of anti-globalization activists when referring to both Porto Alegre and some of the events inspired by it. The February 2001 protests related to a World Economic Forum regional meeting in Mexico and the March 2001 marches around the Inter-American Development Bank meeting in Santiago de Chile were the first big globalization-related protest events in Latin America after the first World Social Forum, and the media coverage of them often referred to the Porto Alegre event as an important moment in the antiglobalization struggles.¹⁷⁴ For those who want to argue for the possibility of a different kind of globalization, the risk of ending up with strange bedfellows is by no means absent. It is not always easy to see the differences, if any, of the “alternative” globalization proposals with the idea of many business leaders that some democratization is necessary in order to make the global expansion of capitalism acceptable.¹⁷⁵ Those who cling to anti-globalization discourse are often right when they claim that the alternative globalization strategies would only lead to very

¹⁷¹ J, Conway, 2003

¹⁷² *ibid*

¹⁷³ Teivo Teivainen, <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on 16.01.2010

¹⁷⁴ “In retrospective, Financial Times described the first Forum as a success” ”Free trade still rules in Mexico”. Financial Times 27.2.2001, p. 6.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Richard Falk and Andrew. Strauss: 2001

moderate changes. Often, but not always, it is frequently assumed that in the anti/alternative divide of globalization debates, being “anti” represents more radical and revolutionary options, whereas the “alternatives” are on the side of more superficial reforms. In terms of thinking about how to democratize the world, this assumption is not very helpful.

“Within the alternative globalization specter, it is possible to find and even easier to imagine such political projects that strive for a globalization that radically transforms the world. While anti-globalization people can be pro-capitalist, pro-globalization people may be anti-capitalist. Some of the debate and divide between the “anti” and the “alternative” is due to confused semantics or distorted categorizations. In order to fundamentally democratize the world, people who have chosen to regard globalization as a term that has been too polluted by its dominant usage and those that think it can still be given more progressive meanings can often work together. In principle, the World Social Forum offers many opportunities for this to happen”¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷⁶ Teivo Teivainen, <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/TeivainenTeivo.pdf> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

CHAPTER IV

4. THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

“In Davos, Switzerland, the annual meetings of the WEF have attracted the world economic and political elite for more than 30 years. The World Economic Forum appears to be an elite club devoted to organizing the world in the interests of big business and free market economics, yet, as the years have passed, the WEF has embraced an increasingly public role and normative agenda. Today the motto of the WEF is “Committed to improving the state of the world”. The WEF is an important site of contestation. Appraisals of the WEF diverge widely”¹⁷⁷.

For many years, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the French monthly close to the anti-neoliberal globalisation movement, has described the World Economic Forum as ‘the meeting place of the masters of the world has undoubtedly become the centre of hyperliberalism, the capital of globalisation, and the main home of the “pensee unique”’.¹⁷⁸ These contrasting views on the influence and power of the WEF in global politics and economy mirror the position of those holding such claims”¹⁷⁹:

those closely associated with the Forum are inclined to deny its power and those fiercely opposed are likely to emphasise its overarching influence. From a theoretical perspective, however, these opposing views express disagreement on one outstanding feature of the changes associated with ‘globalisation’: the significance of new agents in the global political economy beyond states and markets.

¹⁷⁷ Jean-Christophe Graz , How Powerful are Transnational Elite Clubs? The Social Myth of the World Economic Forum, http://my.unil.ch/serval/document/BIB_25874.pdf Retrieved on 14.01.2010

¹⁷⁸ Jean-Christophe Graz , How Powerful are Transnational Elite Clubs? The Social Myth of the World Economic Forum, http://my.unil.ch/serval/document/BIB_25874.pdf Retrieved on 14.01.2010

¹⁷⁹ *ibid*

The meetings of the formally private elite organizations such as the Bilderberg Society, Trilateral Commission and Mont Pelerin Society have tended to attract less public attention than those of the Bretton Woods institutions and other semi-public multilateral organs. Nevertheless, they constitute highly influential networks of transnational coordination in matters of global governance. One of the most influential and controversial of them is the World Economic Forum. The first informal business gathering in Davos, a Swiss mountain town, took place in January 1971 under the name of European Management Forum. Since 1982 the Davos meeting has focused on bringing world economic leaders to its annual meetings, and in 1987 it got its present name World Economic Forum.¹⁸⁰

Member corporations pay large dues to the WEF. Each member corporation pays \$12,500 in annual membership dues and \$6,250 Annual Meeting fees.¹⁸¹ WEF members paid \$38.5 million in fees to the Forum in 2000/2001.

The WEF prides itself on the exclusivity of its corporate membership, which is limited to only 1,000 of “the world’s foremost corporations.”¹⁶ Member companies must have annual revenues of over \$1 billion.¹⁸²

In 1998, the WEF made its membership “even more selective” and continues to “separate” (i.e., eject) companies which “no longer fulfill the criteria.” In 1999, the total values of WEF member companies’ stock exceeded \$3 trillion.¹⁸³

The WEF invites some corporations to become Institutional and/or Knowledge Partners, more tightly tied to the WEF than mere members and charged a hefty fee for their institutional commitment. These WEF Partners pay \$250,000 each year and the Annual Meeting Partners (who co-sponsor the annual event) pay \$78,000 to the WEF Foundation in addition to the \$12,500 annual membership dues and \$6,250 Annual

¹⁸⁰ Bruce Hall Rodney & Thomas J. Biersteker (eds), 2002
¹⁸¹ World Economic Forum 2000/2001 Annual Report at 3.
¹⁸² <http://www.citizen.org/documents/wefreport.pdf> Retrieved on 10.01.2010
¹⁸³ *ibid*

Meeting fees.¹⁸⁴ These partner programs entitle a company to direct input into the agendas of the regional summits and annual Davos meeting.

Selection is based on “ability to contribute to and benefit from the mission of the Forum” — when the most powerful pay, they will benefit from the agenda.¹⁸⁵ The WEF’s annual report notes that the number of partners is limited, but does not reveal the number. As of November 2001, there were 39 Partner companies including Boeing, IBM, Goldman Sachs, Merck, Microsoft, Sun Microsystems and Volkswagen.¹⁸⁶ According to the WEF 2000/2001 Annual Reports, Partner companies have been called upon to take increasingly significant roles in the regional and annual meetings and WEF initiatives.¹⁸⁷

“While the annual forum in Davos promotes its panels and presentations, the real work of the WEF is done in a series of industry sectoral meetings and in private side meetings between corporate titans and groups of political and world economic institution leaders who are able to meet and coordinate without the knowledge of the public, press or even the legislatures of the countries involved. The credentialed press seeking to cover the WEF and many other tiers of WEF meeting participants are kept away from the industry-wide sessions that occur in parallel to the WEF’s annual forum’s announced schedule of panels and events. The press are kept out of most of even those scheduled events”¹⁸⁸.

“The composition of the WEF boards (both the Forum Board of Directors and the sister Council Board of Directors, which together guide the work of the WEF; the primarily staff-populated Managing Board was not examined) between 1999 and 2001 are overwhelmingly male, predominantly white and substantially from the wealthiest nations of Europe, North America and Japan. Additionally, between 1999 and 2001, as

¹⁸⁴ “Entrance Fees to the Marketplace of Ideas,” Washington Post, Jan. 24, 2000 Retrieved on from <http://www.citizen.org/documents/wefreport.pdf> 10.01.2010

¹⁸⁵ World Economic Forum 1999/2000 Annual Report at 10.

¹⁸⁶ World Economic Forum 1998/1999 Annual Report at 2. Accessed from: <https://globalsociology.pbworks.com/f/WEFreport.pdf> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*

the WEF's board size grew its operations focused more on action than discussion and the focus on globalization intensified. Yet the board composition became whiter and more biased towards representation from the wealthy, industrialized nations"¹⁸⁹.

In 2001, more than three-fourths of the WEF board members were white (76.8%).⁴⁶ Almost all of the growth in the boards was in white members, who numbered 34 in 1999 and 43 in 2001 (the number of white board members grew by 26.5% and the share of white board members grew by 6.1%).¹⁹⁰ Asians made up 19.6% of the board in 2001, growing in number by 22.2% since 1999, but the share of Asians on the board grew by 2.6%, or half the rate of whites.⁴⁸ In 2001, the majority of the Asian board members.

Table 2: Wef Board Members

	1999	percentage	2000	percentage	2001	percentage	1999-2001	Relative Change
White	34	72.34%	37	82.22%	43	76.79%	26.47	6.14%
Asian	9	19.15%	7	15.56%	11	19.64%	22.22	2.58%
Mid-Eastern*	3	6.38%	3	6.67%	3	5.36%	0.00%	-16.07%
Black African	1	2.13%	1	2.22%	1	1.79%	0.00%	-16.07%
Latin American	2	4.26%	0	0.00%	1	1.79%	-	-58.04%
Unknown	1	2.13%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	-	-100.00%
Total	47		45		56		19.15	
Developing*	9	19.15%	8	17.78%	9	16.07%	0.00%	-16.07%
Male	47	100.00%	45	100.00%	55	98.21%	17.02	-1.79%
Female	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	1.79%		

¹⁸⁹ ibid

¹⁹⁰ World Economic Forum 1998/1999 Annual Report at 22 and 23; 1999/2000 Annual Report at 22 and 23; World Economic Forum Website, <http://www.weforum.org/site.homepublic.nsf/Content/Our+Organization%5CForum+Council>; <http://www.weforum.org/site.homepublic.nsf/Content/Our+Organization%5CFoundation+Board>. Retrieved on 14.01.2010

4.1. HISTORY

“The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas. Over the course of its 38-year history, the World Economic Forum has achieved a proud record of accomplishments in advancing progress on key issues of global concern”¹⁹¹. Among the highlights are:¹⁹²

4.1.1. WEF 2009: The Annual Meeting 2009 provides a global platform for four heads of government from the G8 (Germany, Japan, Russia and United Kingdom) as well as China, along with heads of government of G20 members from Africa, Asia and Latin America, to help the international community to understand the origins of the financial crisis and to begin to work on solutions based on a common understanding of where we are.

A new World Economic Forum task force of business leaders, economists and other experts are to provide advice to the UN climate negotiations at the request of United Kingdom Prime Minister Brown.

World leaders at the Annual Meeting 2009 celebrate the 10th anniversary of the UN’s Global Compact, which was launched at the Annual Meeting 1999.

The World Economic Forum, in association with Qatar, Singapore and Switzerland, initiated at the Annual Meeting 2009 a global, multistakeholder dialogue on a wider global redesign initiative. The aim is to examine ways to improve global governance to meet a changing international reality.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ <http://www.weforum.org/en/about/History%20and%20Achievements/index.htm> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

¹⁹² ibid

¹⁹³ ibid

4.1.2. WEF 2008: At the Annual Meeting 2008, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda unveiled a five-year, US\$ 10 billion fund to support efforts in developing countries to combat global warming.

4.1.3. WEF 2007: German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, set out Germany's G8 presidency objectives of growth and responsibility" at the Annual Meeting 2007.

4.1.4. WEF 2006: Trade officials meeting at the Annual Meeting 2006 agree to accelerate talks to achieve a world trade deal. Some 25 trade ministers agreed to move on all key issues - agriculture, services and manufacturing - at the same time.

The Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis (2006-2015) is launched by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown and Bill Gates at the Annual Meeting 2006. The project - a coalition of over 400 organizations – aims to treat 50 million people and prevent 14 million tuberculosis deaths worldwide over the next ten years.

The Annual Meeting 2006 gives sports leaders a voice. They presented their ideas on sport as a personal and social development tool, and called for new efforts to increase the impact of sport on society.¹⁹⁴

4.1.5. WEF 2005: The World Economic Forum works closely with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair, to set his G-8 policy priorities of poverty alleviation in Africa and climate change. The Annual Meeting 2005 served as a platform for Mr Blair to launch his G-8 agenda.

An advisory board created and led by the World Economic Forum helps shape Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair's G-8 climate change agenda. The board, consisting of 24 global company chiefs, presented to G-8 leaders at their annual summit a statement calling on governments to establish ‘ ‘clear, transparent and consistent price signals’ ’ through the creation of a long-term policy framework that includes all major emitters of greenhouse gases.

¹⁹⁴ http://www.cosmoworlds.com/world_economic_forum-history.htm Retrieved on 14.01.2010

Over 350 business leaders at the World Economic Forum's Africa Economic Summit sign a declaration endorsing the Commission for Africa's recommendations for the multibillion dollar aid plan. The letter was presented to G-8 leaders at their annual summit.¹⁹⁵

4.1.6. WEF 2003: At the World Economic Forum's Extraordinary Annual Meeting in Jordan, under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II, the Arab Business Council is established in the aftermath of the war in Iraq to provide an important forum for shaping future prosperity and security in the Middle East.

A regionwide US-Middle East Free Trade Zone is launched to open trade between the US and Arab nations. Consisting of more than 50 of the region's top business leaders, the Council is set to create cooperative action among leading members of the Arab corporate sector to enhance the competitiveness of the Arab region and to facilitate its integration into the global economy.¹⁹⁶

4.1.7. WEF 2002: The Forum provides a platform for the creation of a Disaster Resource Network, leveraging engineering and transportation industry firms' resources to assist with disaster relief efforts. The Forum moved its Annual Meeting from its traditional setting in Davos, Switzerland, to New York City in an act of solidarity with the city following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the U.S.

President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa announced that Microsoft would supply free software to all 32,000 government schools in his country. This was possible through the WEF's Global Digital Divide Initiative.

Canada's Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, announced the creation of a C\$500 million fund for Africa to support the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, or NEPAD, through implementation of the G-8 Africa Action Plan. More

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.weforum.org/en/about/History%20and%20Achievements/index.htm> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

¹⁹⁶ http://www.cosmoworlds.com/world_economic_forum-history.htm Retrieved on 14.01.2010

than 200 African and multinational companies signed the NEPAD's Business Endorsement, committing their businesses to supporting the NEPAD, a few months later at the Africa Economic Summit 2002.

Thirty-six chief executives signed the CEO Statement of the Global Corporate Citizenship Initiative. The statement recommends a framework for action to manage the impact of business on society and to strengthen relationships with stakeholders around the world. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced, at the Annual Meeting, a contribution of \$50 million for Africa. This sum included a \$20 million donation to the testing of a promising microbicide that could potentially help protect women from HIV/AIDS.¹⁹⁷

4.1.8. WEF 2000: Recommendations from the Global Digital Divide Task Force are submitted to the G-8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit 2000; most of the proposals are adopted during the Summit and have become part of its final communiqué.

At the Annual Meeting 2000, World Health Organization Secretary-General Gro Harlem Brundtland announces a Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI).¹⁹⁸

4.1.9. WEF 1999: "UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announces the "Global Compact," to give "a human face to the global market" at the Forum's Annual Meeting"¹⁹⁹.

4.1.10. WEF 1994: "Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat reach a draft agreement on Gaza and Jericho at the Annual Meeting 1994"²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.aegis.com/news/wsj/2003/WJ030103.html> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.weforum.org/en/about/History%20and%20Achievements/index.htm> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

¹⁹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰⁰ *ibid*

4.1.11. WEF 1992: “South African President F. W. de Klerk meets Nelson Mandela and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi at the Annual Meeting 1992, their first joint appearance outside South Africa and a milestone in the country's political transition.”²⁰¹

4.1.12. WEF 1989: “North and South Korea hold their first ministerial-level meetings at the Forum's Annual Meeting; at the same meeting, East German Prime Minister Hans Modrow and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl meet to discuss German reunification”²⁰².

4.1.13. WEF 1988: “Greece and Turkey turn back from the brink of war by signing the "Davos Declaration" at the Forum's Annual Meeting 1988”²⁰³.

4.1.14. WEF 1987: “In order to reflect its increasingly global outlook, the name of the foundation was changed to World Economic Forum.

Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Germany's Foreign Minister delivered his famous "Let's give Gorbachev a chance" speech at the annual meeting in Davos”²⁰⁴.

This is considered by many historians to mark the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

4.1.15. WEF 1982: “A special informal gathering of trade ministers from 17 countries, organized by the Forum, spurred the launch of the Uruguay Round”²⁰⁵.

The first informal gathering of world economic leaders took place on the occasion of the annual meeting in Davos, and brought together cabinet members of major countries with heads of international organizations -- such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization. This continues to serve as a model for similar initiatives in the global public interest, including: the club of media leaders (editors-in-chief), the annual informal gathering of heads of the world's foremost non-governmental economic research organizations, the informal gathering of regional

²⁰¹ http://www.cosmoworlds.com/world_economic_forum-history.htm Retrieved on 14.01.2010

²⁰² <http://www.weforum.org/en/about/History%20and%20Achievements/index.htm> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

²⁰³ *ibid*

²⁰⁴ *ibid*

²⁰⁵ *ibid*

leaders, the informal gathering of global city leaders, and the roundtable of industry and international organization leaders. All take place on the occasion of the annual meeting in Davos.²⁰⁶

4.1.16. WEF 1979: “The Forum becomes the first non-governmental institution to initiate a partnership with China's economic development commissions, spurring economic reform policies in China. The Forum published its first annual World Competitiveness Report, marking the debut of the foundation's research activities. The Report's name changed to The Global Competitiveness Report in 1996”²⁰⁷.

4.2. The World Economic Forum: 2009

“After some years of increasing media criticism about its relevance, 2009 provided the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting (Davos) with real opportunity to prove its worth. The financial and economic crisis provided the backdrop - albeit a gloomy and tense one - for timely, meaningful discussion. Over 2,500 delegates came together from governments, business, voluntary civic and social organizations and institutions around the world to understand the causes and impact of the crisis, and to begin to agree on some potential solutions”²⁰⁸.

This year's theme for Davos was "Shaping the post-crisis world," which was explored through six programmatic tracks, or sub-themes²⁰⁹:

1. Promoting stability in the financial system and reviving global economic growth

²⁰⁶ Wall Street Journal - January 20, 2003

²⁰⁷ <http://www.weforum.org/en/about/History%20and%20Achievements/index.htm> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

²⁰⁸ The Davos 2009 Forum Handbook, 2009. Accessed from: [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/World_economic_forum_davos_2009/\\$FILE/World_economic_forum_davos_2009.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/World_economic_forum_davos_2009/$FILE/World_economic_forum_davos_2009.pdf) Retrieved on 12.01.2010

²⁰⁹ ibid

- 2.Ensuring effective global, regional and national governance for the long term
- 3.Addressing the challenges of sustainability and development
- 4.Shaping the values and leadership principles for a post-crisis world
- 5.Catalyzing the next wave of growth through innovation, science and technology
- 6.Understanding the implications on industry business model

Inevitably, the biggest topic of conversation at Davos this year was the financial crisis; including how - and when - the world economy will recover. The fact that the overarching theme was "Shaping the post-crisis world" speaks exactly to this point.

“The financial crisis was not without its predictors - many of whom sounded warnings at Davos in previous years. Former US Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence Summers cautioned against complacency at the 2007 forum. He returned in 2008 to say that "a cascading loss of confidence" threatened to paralyze the global economy. The bankers apparent lack of willingness to see the signs was, as one expert put it, "as if a pilot was assuming that he would never fly into a hurricane, because he hadn't come across one during the past year."²¹⁰ There was also consensus that immature risk management ideology and processes were key factors in the economic downfall. Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of Russia, and Wen Jiabao, Premier of the People's Republic of China, both pointed the blame in the direction of the West and the bankers; for example, Putin stated that "today, investment banks, the pride of Wall Street, have virtually ceased to exist."²¹¹

We define *competitiveness* as *the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country*. The level of productivity, in turn, sets the sustainable level of prosperity that can be earned by an economy. In other words, more-competitive economies tend to be able to produce higher levels of income for their citizens. The concept of competitiveness thus involves static and dynamic components: although the productivity of a country clearly determines its ability to sustain its *level of*

²¹⁰ ibid

²¹¹ Nouriel Roubini, http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/news/news.cfm?doc_id=1835 Retrieved on 12.01.2010

income, it is also one of the central determinants of the returns to investment, which is one of the key factors explaining an economy's *growth potential*.²¹²

“There were two critical questions around economic growth: when it would return, and how it would be driven, with little consensus reached on either. There was talk of "Depression Lite" and "Depression 2.0" (although it is unlikely to get as bad as the 1930s, when the US economy shrank 27% between 1929 and 1933). Still, one expert warned that the world would have to brace itself for "a best-case scenario of at least a year of recession and a lost decade of growth."²¹³ A major concern was that some parties were still in denial about the full extent of this prospect - and that governments are tackling the problem too narrowly: Harvard economics professor Kenneth Rogoff predicted several years of downturn if governments don't complement fiscal stimulus with equally ambitious plans to clear banks' books of bad assets, and get credit flowing through the system”²¹⁴.

“The source of new growth was also an issue, and pinning global hopes primarily on the emerging economies began to seem misguided at Davos. More likely, global growth, when it comes, will still be powered in part by US consumers. Despite optimistic soundbites, including Wen suggesting "Spring is around the corner," China sought to downplay its own impact on the world recovery, as its largely export-driven growth has been hit hard by the downturn elsewhere, and its lack of social security forces the Chinese to save rather than consume. Even the Gulf States were quiet - with their foreign asset portfolios losing around US\$100b in the last year, and their primary focus moving to protecting existing assets rather than buying new ones. The only real consensus was that there is no single answer to restart growth”²¹⁵.

²¹² World Economic Forum 2009 Annual Report at 15

²¹³ Nouriel Roubini, 2009

²¹⁴ **The Davos 2009 Forum Handbook, 2009. Accessed from:**
[http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/World_economic_forum_davos_2009/\\$FILE/World_economic_forum_davos_2009.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/World_economic_forum_davos_2009/$FILE/World_economic_forum_davos_2009.pdf) Retrieved on 12.01.2010

²¹⁵ *ibid*

For the past three decades, the World Economic Forum's annual competitiveness reports have examined the many factors enabling national economies to achieve sustained economic growth and long-term prosperity.

The goals over the years have been to provide benchmarking tools for business leaders and policymakers to identify obstacles to improved competitiveness, thus stimulating discussion on strategies to overcome them. In the current challenging economic environment, our work serves as a critical reminder of the importance of taking into account the consequences of our present actions on future prosperity²¹⁶.

“The determinants of competitiveness are many and complex. Economists have long tried to understand what determines the wealth of nations. This attempt has ranged from Adam Smith's focus on specialization and the division of labor to neoclassical economists emphasis on investment in physical capital and infrastructure and, more recently, to interest in other mechanisms such as education and training, technological progress (whether created within the country or adopted from abroad)²¹⁷. The GCI captures this open-ended dimension by providing a weighted average of many different components, each of which reflects one aspect of the complex concept that we call competitiveness. We group all these components into *12 pillars of*²¹⁸

Competitiveness:

- Institutions
- Infrastructure
- Macroeconomic stability
- Health and primary education
- Goods market efficiency
- Higher education and training
- Labor market efficiency
- Financial market sophistication

²¹⁶ World Economic Forum 2009 Annual Report at 15.

²¹⁷ Schwab, Klaus, 2009. The Global Competitiveness Report 2009-2010. World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland 2009

²¹⁸ *ibid*

- Market size
- Technological readiness
- Business sophistication
- Innovation

CHAPTER V

5. COMPARATIVE POINTS

“It was the first time the WSF was held outside Porto Alegre, Brazil, where it was born in January 2001 with 20,000 people from 117 countries. The numbers of participants kept swelling, to 50,000 in 2002, about 100,000 in 2003 and 150,000 from 130 countries”²¹⁹. Whereas to the counter emergence of World Social Forum; World Economic Forum (WEF), which is the famous annual meeting of global political and business leaders has been held in Davos, Switzerland.

“Today it is common for the media and public to contrast the two events. On one hand there is WEF, it is the meeting point of many hundreds of world leaders pondering over the future of economic growth and where business leaders strike deals. On the other hand, there is WSF, it is where many thousands of mainly idealistic people meet to discuss and plan how to overcome the problems of the world’s poor and marginalized section. In addition, they claim that all problems are caused by a monopolistic global system of wealth and national systems of social inequity”²²⁰.

Today, the WSF has matched or even more than WEF in capturing public attention and imagination. WSF is the very representative of what WEF propose. WSF is

²¹⁹ Martin Khor, 2004

²²⁰ *ibid*

the symbolized banner of local activists who are seeking global democratization; while WEF is the symbol of global power competition and the patterns of “management” and administration of the disadvantaged “others”.

WSF has a kind of “g-localization” process, which is the opposite of what WEF supposes. WEF is interested in the maximization of profits of which is the “sacred” mission; yet, WSF asserts the existence of the equal and fair life in contrary to the business sector.

“It is from the WSF that the famous anti-/alter-globalization slogan “another world is possible” hails. Definitely, the way that “Davos Man” states to be all in favour of social justice *a la* the WSF. But it doesn’t really wash. The WEF and the WSF are not at all about the same things. Presumably, Davos attendees accept this kind of talk as a necessity of legitimation or to put it more cynically, a “cloaking device”²²¹.

John Elkington and Seb Beloe says :

“I suspect that many of the more traditional corporate WEF supporters still think that the decision to let in more NGOs to the Davos event in the wake of 1999’s “Battle of Seattle” was a strategic mistake. And the fact that there was a serious falling out between WEF and Friends of the Earth in the closing hours of the summit probably confirmed their fears. But the pressures to forge connections between WEF and WSF are growing...”

“If you’re an optimist, the gap is closing—in that WEF has made huge strides to address many of the issues that are now central to the WSF agenda. Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was the strongest bridge by far between the two events, but even he noted that he had to defend his decision to come to Davos. The best long-term outcome would be a progressive convergence between WEF and WSF, since neither

²²¹ World Economic Forum Preview. Accessed from: <http://davostoseattle.wordpress.com/2009/01/14/world-economic-forum-preview/> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

can achieve a knock-out.”²²²

There’s still plenty to be pessimistic about the WEF which sounds remarkably complacent about the challenges of sustainable development. And on the challengers’ side, there are major hurdles to overcome before real convergence is likely. WSF is still pitched as an “anti-Davos” event—and WEF is building a series of initiatives (including its “Global Leaders of Tomorrow” and “Social Entrepreneurs” programs), which might just conceivably be used to outflank WSF. To ensure this doesn’t happen, WSF is going to have to come up with a coherent, pragmatic and saleable agenda—and fast”

“The differences between the WEF and the WSF, especially in terms of approach, are stark. While the 2009 convenings of the WSF and WEF may share some agenda items, the WSF agenda is completely different in terms of process and inspiration. These are obvious from the proposal from the WSF working group on culture: “The WSF 2009 will present culture as the form of the strategies and actions of civil society and social movements... We hope to deepen and to enlarge the consensus which bases our political struggles through the understanding and the integration of culture as a priority dimension in the politics and processes of the eco-socio-economic transformation, in conformity with the WSF Charter of Principles... Culture must assume an effective transversality in all initiatives and help to identify new informational, pedagogical and communicational tools, needed for the strategic expansion of the messages we advocate for. Only in the interface between Culture-Communication - Politics transformational strategies and tools can be conceived”.²²³

WEF is the center of elite masters of world who are stuck into the hyperliberalism and penseé unique.²²⁴ “The field of enquiry is broad: it encompasses the study of private

²²² World Economic Forum Vs. World Social Forum <http://www.greenatworkmag.com/index.html>
Retrieved on 14.01.2010

²²³ <http://www.civicus.org/civicus-news/30-civicusnews/862-towards-an-inspired-2009-wsf>
Retrieved on 14.01.2010

²²⁴ Graz, http://my.unil.ch/serval/document/BIB_25874.pdf Retrieved on 14.01.2010

global corporate actors as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the appropriation of knowledge and its diffusion through media networks and think-tanks as well as transnational organised crime and neo-mercenary trends embodied in private military companies”²²⁵. Furthermore, it can be said that “the mutual trust on which the whole club atmosphere hinges was clearly destroyed. For activist leaders, “the place to be henceforth was not Davos, but Porto Alegre in Brazil, with its competing World Social Forum”²²⁶.

WSF provides the favorable context of counter hegemonic globalization and a truly “global left”, while WEF is the very center of right wing in the world. WSF has an alliance with diverse social groups, NGOs who are in practioners of national and global struggles²²⁷. WEF is the reverse ideal of WSF, and it is the very opponent of new social and political phenomenon with his old fashioned cost benefit approaches.

On the other hand, both WEF and WSF are the products of network society²²⁸ which is the area of informational capitalism and unification of network of different kind of “networks”. Regimes of transnational governance, organization and invention condemn people to come together in front of the common enemy or in the circle of common interests. Cultural and political context bind them to institutionalize within forums such as WEF and WSF.

In conclusion, WEF and WEF are seen as contradictory forums in terms of the use of global, transnational capital and also the social, human capital. Justice and fair distribution of resources is the main argument between them. WEF is seeking the maximization of profits and WSF is seeking the maximization of human benefit. WEF is the club of business corporative elites and WSF is the center of social unrest of “glocal” identities and social movements.

²²⁵

ibid

²²⁶

ibid

²²⁷

Santos, 2006: 7

²²⁸

Juris, http://www.jeffreyjuris.com/articles/Castells_ch15.pdf Retrieved on 19.01.2010

CHAPTER VI

6. CONCLUSION

“The concept of holding social forums as a meeting of civil society that presents positive alternatives to neoliberalism and militarism has gained wide appeal throughout the world. Civil society had become empowered and revitalized with new ideas. Local and thematic forums began to pop up all over the world”²²⁹.

Increasingly, local and global struggles were linked as social movements engaged in the praxis of combining theoretical reflection with political action. Even in the United States, the fundamentally subversive notion of organizing a social forum took hold and led activists to rethink fundamentally how to organize civil society. These gatherings were an inspiration—that another world is possible, one free from war, hunger, exploitation and fear, in which people can work together to make this a better place for everyone²³⁰

There is an increasing desire in the civil society sector to continuously look for lobby and advocacy areas that provide opportunities to influence the target audiences effectively and produce the desired paradigm shift in their area of specialty.

The World Social Forum (WSF) very limited such, more correctly described as a the most inclusive and participatory transnational civil society to this date. It is “representing this world as it fights for another possible world”, i.e. lives in and represents an imperialist, repressive and unjust world while it tries to transform it²³¹ We all “exist, against-in-and beyond capital”, i.e. we are of this world, structured and

²²⁹ Marc Becker, World Social Forum, May 24, 2006

²³⁰ *ibid*

²³¹ Holloway, John 2002, *Change the World without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today*, London: Pluto Press

defined by it, yet; not only, still simultaneously able to say no, move against our being of this world²³².

Understood like that, WSF is a “critical utopia” in a contemporary unjust world of repression and social control giving people oppositional orientation and belonging, while WSF at the same time cannot become more utopian than its participating movements and groups enable it to before the moment²³³ “As such there is an existential limit to how much we can expect from the WSF. In an imperial and neoliberal world you *cannot* have a *complete* representation of a non-imperial and non-neoliberal world during a world encounter, it is just the way it is, and we need to accept that”²³⁴.

“At the same time, in order to be an emancipatory global civil society, to be against-in-and-beyond this world order, two criteria are helpful. Firstly, the WSF need at least to reach some kind of global participation (“globalness”) before it can be labeled a “global civil society” and a minimal democracy in order to be seen as an emancipatory and democratic civil society. Secondly, it needs to be seen to move in an emancipatory, democratizing and globalizing *direction*. On this second criterion, WSF is strong and why it is strong has two reasons”²³⁵.

Nevertheless, the WSF continued to face a series of problems and engaged a series of issues that would determine its future. From its conception, the WSF focused on civil society and eschewed involvement with political parties or forming a popular front. The WSF emphasized reflection, not action. The idea was to leave the later to member groups. John Holloway in particular argued quite adamantly that “the world cannot be changed through the state.”²³⁶.

232

ibid

233

Santos, 2006

234

Vinithagen, Stellan, 2008. “Is The World Social Forum A Democratic Global Civil Society?”.

Accessed from:

<http://resistancestudies.org/files/Stellan/Vinithagen%20WSF%20as%20a%20GCS%202008.pdf> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

235

ibid

236

John Holloway, 2002: 19.

“The impact of the annual gathering that has brought together thousands of civil society groups since its first edition in January 2001 has grown enormously... as a platform for catapulting social issues onto the global agenda”²³⁷.

For some, the Forum is now passé, awaiting its demise before an ascendant and inevitable new "new." For others, the Forum has become an annual reunion, a time to swap stories and reconnect with old friends. Over time, however, a serious, multifold critique has developed and needs to be addressed if the forum process is to remain useful. This is particularly urgent because the problems identified as compromising the WSF's moral authority and political efficacy continues to grow. Yet as serious people consider the challenges, many solutions are proffered that may alter the fundamental character of the social forum. In this note, we suggest that modest reforms are necessary and that these will enhance rather than detract from the forum as a beacon of emancipatory and counter-hegemonic thinking and practice²³⁸.

“The WSF, which attracted over 155 000 participants from 135 countries in the year 2005 has its own limitations. Firstly, when evaluated from one year to the other, the gathering can be best described as the same people, coming from the same organizations, taking the same issues to the same platform in the same manner in the hope that the clichés will yield different results each time”²³⁹.

Secondly, the WSF has dismally failed to be an instrument for action²⁴⁰. Many activists and participating intellectuals would like to see the WSF choose three or four main themes at the most, in order to concentrate the global meet's efforts. They argue

²³⁷ Douglas Ngwenya Available from <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/issue/188> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

²³⁸ [The Future of the World Social Forum Process](http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/174/30688.html#1), Kim Foltz and Suren Moodliar, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/174/30688.html#1> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

²³⁹ Douglas Ngwenya Available from <http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/cso/cso7/civil-society.pdf> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

²⁴⁰ <http://www.ipsterraviva.net/tv/wsf2005/> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

that such a broad range of ideas and proposals stands in the way of making the WSF more effective²⁴¹.

“However, any opportunity for convening, discussion and dialogue is important for collectively engaging with the formulation of solutions to global problems. While the WEF allows the "market jungle actors" to or the business leaders to talk, there are still fears that agreements reached will not take into account all the parties that they will affect - especially ordinary citizens”²⁴².

“One key result from the Doha "Financing for Development" Conference at the beginning of this month was the unanimous call by the G-192 to convene an inclusive international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, to review the international financial and monetary architecture and its impact on development. All engaged stakeholders should now support and prepare for such an international, multilaterally-led, economic forum, which could also contribute to rethinking global governance rules”²⁴³.

There are six widely-held critiques of the WSF and the forum process: (i) it is too large, incoherent, and more of a carnival, than a space for serious engagement in ideas, strategizing and mobilizing; (ii) there are too many for, and too little time in between for action; (iii) the forum's governance and accountability structures are weak and largely undemocratic, and the emergence of local for is undervalued by the leaders of these structures; (iv) the forum is too inclusive of forces that themselves are products of the neo-liberal project (e.g. large establishment-oriented NGOs, big foundations, and inter-governmental bodies); (v) little is done to include dynamic social-movement actors that do not yet have or eschew traditional organization; (vi) the forum is not suited to some national contexts; in particular, the United States lacks the social movements and organizations necessary to become a true part of the social forum process. In addition to

²⁴¹ ibid

²⁴² Valot, Henri, 2009. Towards an Inspired 2009 World Social Forum. Accessed from: <http://www.civicus.org/civicus-news/30-civicusnews/862-towards-an-inspired-2009-wsf> Retrieved on 12.01.2010

²⁴³ ibid

these six internal critiques, a practical concern questions the very relevance of the Forum²⁴⁴.

“These critiques are not new and have been in wide circulation since at least the third WSF (January, 2003). Indeed, many of the questions are now being repeated across for in time, without new answers being offered, causing the "graying" of the WSF. Admittedly, not everyone is overly concerned about these critiques; some even embrace many of the things that generate the sharpest criticisms. Where some find incoherence, others find a jazz-like improvisation. Where some feel that it is too inclusive of forces from the world we must make impossible, others laud the forum's diversity. Moreover, the criticisms are not fatal: Whatever the problems of the WSF and broader social forum process, the genie is out of the box. Nobody can call it off. If the current WSF organizers decide not to hold another social forum, others will organize one in their stead”²⁴⁵.

What should be done in the future is the most problematic issue. Should the WEF be abolished? Or should WSF be reorganized and re-situated in the international area? Rehabilitation of politics and organizational chain could be one remedy to the present condition; however, who would be responsible for that? The General will of world people and optimum participation to an alternative forum which could be the stage of discussion could be a temporary and beginner level pace to that dichotomy. It would not be forgotten that the world belongs to “people” wherever live, whenever they die and whatever they eat...

²⁴⁴ [The Future of the World Social Forum Process](http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/174/30688.html#1), Kim Foltz and Suren Moodliar, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/174/30688.html#1> Retrieved on 14.01.2010

²⁴⁵ *ibid*

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