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## Alternatives to Hegemony: The World Social Forum

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## Alternatives to Hegemony: The World Social Forum

María Gisela Pereyra Doval

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### Civil Society against Neoliberal Domination

Anybody who has studied Latin American History, or even World History, would not be surprised to learn that Latin American countries have always suffered external domination from the current hegemonic or regional leader.

For instance, in the XIX century, whenever there was a political or economic conflict, the reaction of regional powers was the military occupation of the indebted country. In the XX century, however, the so-called *powerfuls* and their hegemonic forces organized coups d'état and consequently, decided who would govern these countries and imposed functional leaders who worked for the political and economic benefit of hegemony.

Furthermore, and during the last decades, some international financial organizations, managed by the powerful countries, have been in charge of *teaching* our countries how to behave properly. It is important to highlight that both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) consider that the higher the quota the countries contribute the higher the quantity of votes. As Borón and Lechini state: “[...] The primacy of the ‘dominant thinking’ was materialized in the ‘conditionalities’ that the international financial institutions, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, imposed on the exhausted economies of the South [...]” (2005: 12).

Sociological, political and economic pressures gradually imposed on different countries from different continents –i.e., Latin America, Asia, and Africa– have generated and consolidated situations which perpetuate the existing imbalances. As Fisher and Ponniah argue: “The bankruptcy of the dominant world order is leading to social, ecological, political and economic non-sustainability with societies, ecosystems, and economies disintegrating and breaking down” (2003: 1).

This is due not only to the impossibility of impoverished countries of solving economic problems (for example, external debt), but also to the success of powerful countries in convincing the South of its own incapacity to solve problems and putting into practice *recipes* which, in the North itself, would have been considered impossible to apply. We totally agree with Prabhat Patnaik when he establishes that: “The new phase of imperialism converts economics from a scientific discipline to an ideological tool for imperialist hegemony” (2005: 11).

As a result of globalization, in general, and the so-called Washington Consensus (W.C.<sup>1</sup>), in particular, the transformations produced in the Southern countries contributed to a noticeable worsening of the inequalities in the these countries and

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1 W.C. refers to the Washington Consensus not to the Water Closet, although the one who subscribes is responsible for any similarity with reality.

in the International System. This state of affairs generates a situation of increasing exclusion and impoverishment of a great number of people world-wide.

Globalisation is basically an economic and financial phenomenon, but it also has different manifestations in each human activity, such as in political, social, institutional, ecological issues, etc. Since the Seventies, and more specifically from the Eighties, some tendencies have become visible. These tendencies were implemented by the main powers to reach a higher level and expand, therefore, the relations of capitalist production. At the very beginning, the powers could achieve this because of the weakness of the Third World countries –due to the Debt Crisis–; later, because the Soviet Union and the socialist regimes collapsed. Throughout the Nineties, the phenomenon brought deeper changes in the structure of power.

From the last decade on, the huge polarizing effects have become more serious, for both developed and developing countries. The emergence of a new labour international division resulting from the improvement of science and technology produced a deeper inequality between poor and rich nations, and also among the citizens in the same community. This situation brought about permanent unemployment and an unequal income distribution in the labour market. The contradiction between the liberal speech and the protectionistic practice in the most powerful countries, on one hand, and the political apathy of the population, on the other hand, have led some sectors to consider the necessity of implementing modifications to the system.

The sectors suffering the effects of this pattern have organized resistant social movements in their countries, setting limits to the existing polarization in the social structure. The *Zapatistas* rising in Chiapas (1994) and the *First Meeting for the Humanity against the Neoliberalism* carried out in Lacandona jungle in 1996, constituted the starting points of the current movements against neoliberal globalisation. This first meeting and the second one, held in Spain (1998), were the antecedents of the so-called *People Global Action against the Free Trade*: the first worldwide coordinated action against the economic globalisation and neoliberalism. However, some scholars consider that it was the *Seattle Battle* the initiator of the antiglobalisation cycle.

In this context, the civil society has founded a strategy based on the struggle from the inside against the model, using its own possibilities and contradictions. Acanda wrote that: “To invoke civil society, in the new popular struggle and in the antiglobalisation movements, is based on the understanding of the existence, at the social inner, of an organic interaction with the systemic and antisystemic, and on the possibility to strengthen the latter through a multiple and coordinate action” (2002: 60).

There are more groups with similar objectives besides the ones mentioned above, such as the resistant movements that protect the rights of the indigenous population in Peru or Bolivia, the landless in Brazil, the Picketers in Argentina<sup>2</sup>.

### **The World Social Forum creation**

The idea of articulating different national movements started to flourish at the beginning of the Nineties in order to face this sort of problems at an international level as a whole. There were few initiatives, movements and institutions that had essential incidence to impel these movements internationally. The success in the campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), the creation of the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions to Aid Citizens (ATTAC)

2 We agree with Anderson (2004) when he argues that the resistance movements in Latin America are superior to those elsewhere in the world.

and the World Alternatives Forum were very important antecedents to give birth to the World Social Forum. The campaign came out in 1998, prior to the publication of the drafts<sup>3</sup> of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, edited by the OECD. According to the MAI's drafts, investments are every kind of assets belonging to or controlled by an investor in any geographical place; it extends the Most-Favoured-Nation Treatment world-wide; no requirement or petitions can be made by any signing State; among other rules, multinational companies have the same legal status of the States. In conclusion, these copies assumed the protection to foreign investments, denying the States' right to regulate its financial flows inside their nations –giving a free way to the international finance capital–.

That is the reason why ecological movements, civil right movements, intellectual ones, etc. were convened, and they halted negotiations in 1998. From that moment on, the initiative to create an association promoting the regulation of the especulative flows –ATTAC– cropped up. The ATTAC tries to place a tax on these flows in order to soften the most devastating effects of the neoliberal model. This tax is known as the Tobin<sup>4</sup> Tax.

Regarding this subject, ATTAC, Le Monde Diplomatique, the Committee against the Multilateral Agreement of Investment, the Landless Movement of Brazil, etc., were the first coordinators and promoters of an international movement among every social movement in the world wanting participation.

These forums appeared in their different manifestations before 2000. From this date on, the expanding phase of the Movement started. However, there were a large number of meetings at a continental and regional level (such as the First African Social Forum in Bamako, Mali; the World Social Assembly “Another World is Possible” in Monterrey, Mexico; the Continental Meeting “Another America is Possible” in Quito, Ecuador; the First European Social Forum in Florence, Italy –all held in 2002–; the Asian Social Forum in Hyderabad, India; the Latinamerican Antiglobalisation Forum in Potosí, Bolivia; and the European Social Forum in Paris, France, –held in 2003–, there is no doubt that the most emblematic meetings are the World Social Forums. They were held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January, 2001 and 2002 and in February, 2003; in Mumbai, India<sup>5</sup> in January, 2004; and the last one, in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January, 2005. This year, the main events of the Forum will take place in a decentralized way; they will be held in a polycentric Forum place in Bamako (Mali), Karachi (Pakistan) and Caracas (Venezuela).

Every year, at the end of January, politicians, economists and even ecclesiastical representatives attend the World Economic Forum in the Swiss town resort of Davos. The World Social Forum (WSF) emerged as an alternative to the neoliberal project represented by the World Economic Forum.

What is important to emphasize about this embryonic phenomenon is that there is a bidirectional relationship between the national movements and their international expressions, since the WSF started as a national movement. Although there is a certain order of inequality, the WSF has the capacity of summing up and promoting the local claims worldwide.

This phenomenon could be explained as a result of the intensification of the polarized tendencies of the capitalist system at a national and worldwide level. We would like to quote Samir Amin *in extenso*:

“In this theory of the worldwide expansion of capitalism, the qualitative transformations of the systems of accumulation between one phase and an-

3 The whole document can be seen at: [www.citizen.org](http://www.citizen.org) (144 pages).

4 Originally, Economist James Tobin, Nobel Economy Prize, proposed this tax.

5 The Forum process became worldwide in Mumbai. In the previous ones, Latin Americans dominated the scene, so the move to India was a symbolic opening towards the world as a whole.

other in its history construct the successive forms of the asymmetrical, centers/peripheries polarization, that is, of concrete imperialism. The contemporary world system will, consequently, continue to be imperialistic (polarizing) in any possible future, so long as the fundamental logic of its deployment continues to be dominated by capitalist relations of production. This theory associates imperialism with the process of capital accumulation on a worldwide scale, an event that I regard as one sole reality with different dimensions, which are, in fact, inseparable” (2004: 71).

The second characteristic of this Movement is its diversity. This diversity helps the circulation of different experiences. As it is noticeable, certain realities and issues vary according to type and intensity. Some of the problems have specific features in each country, while others, such as cultural impoverishment and subjugation, are common to every member of this movement. That is why the Forum is not expected to become a homogeneous, unidirectional movement with static aims. On the contrary, it is a movement that seeks for convergence of objectives and demands based on the heterogeneity of its composition. Hardt and Negri explain that: “It is not really a matter of fixing a point of unity or, worse yet, identity, but simply finding what is common in our differences. This proliferation of differences went to Porto Alegre to discover it was a common network, and from this new condition it will go back out to establish new differences everywhere. Every difference is an organizational project” (2003: XVII).

To the above mentioned, we can add two more distinctions that seem to be important in order to understand this phenomenon. As Fisher and Ponniah argue: “[...] They emerge with increasing speed and with less for geographical distance; and they move along networks that are neither fixed nor symmetrical –things do not move in all directions, flows are unequal, and networks are subject to change” (2002: 2).

These features allow us to clarify the basic aims of the movement within this embryonic stage. The most immediate purpose is to achieve certain regularity and permanence of the meetings so as to facilitate a greater knowledge among the different sectors that constitute the Forum. In order to reach this objective, the Movement organizes Regional Forums.

The first essential step is to become known and connected to each other; the following step is to articulate demands and strategies. Once the demands are articulated, they have to be systematized; therefore, it is indispensable to discuss priorities, that is to say, to examine which represent the main problems of the world and the regions in the WSF.

The most relevant issues, common to the majority of the claims presented in the meetings, are thus established. All these forums have declared themselves against the internationalization of neoliberalism and free trade manipulation by the most powerful states, through the international financial and commercial institutions.

“Many aggressive elements of that policy, which they share, have favoured the development of ties among them<sup>6</sup>, at the same time that they are progressively identified with the non common ones, driven by a necessary solidarity” (Oroza Busutil, 2004: 66).

Likewise, they aim at protecting the nations’ rights for food and agriculture sovereignty, a topic related directly to the questioning of commercial liberalization and the control of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Besides, all the forum members declare themselves against militarization and war. The nations’ right to the use of their natural resources is protected, as well as their political identity and cultural diversity. The movements attending the Forum condemn

6 *Them* refers to the victims of neoliberal mechanisms.

the payment of the external debt and blame the latter for its direct relationship with poverty. Violation of human rights is also condemned and workers' rights should be protected.

Together with the common demands, each region puts forward its own demands. This is why there is a strong resistance to the Area of Free Trade of the Americas and to the militarization of the region in the Latin American movements. The latter refers particularly to specific militarization plans like the Colombia Plan and the Puebla Panama Plan.

In Asia, the initiator of the main social movements against neoliberalism was the 1997 financial crisis. These movements fight mainly against militarism and the end of all external presence and interventions (especially in Afghanistan, Korea, Philippines, Uzbekistan and Iraq, among others); they condemn the human rights abuses in Aceh, Mindanao and Burma, among others.

Finally, the most damaged regions regarding wealth distribution and social inequalities are located in Africa. Consequently, there are all sort of strong claims denouncing the policies that perpetuate imperialism and colonialism. They struggle for the right to water, electricity and housing, as well as for the eradication of the AIDS epidemic. They claim for the rights of racial *majorities* and denounce discrimination.

As regards the nature of the WSF, the most important concept to consider is that this international movement is not isolated; it is grounded on the different national realities, such as the local groups who fight against a global phenomenon which overcomes the sphere and the possibilities of the State. However, it is necessary to emphasize that the Civil Society in general, and the antiglobalisation movements –like the WSF– in particular, should grow at the international level, by creating homogeneous worldwide strategies, without leaving their national characteristics aside. In this sense, according to Anderson, we are able to remark that Latin America is the only region that combines three factors:

“[...] the resistance to neoliberalism and to neo-imperialism melds the cultural with the social and national [...] Latin America is –and this is fact that is frequently forgotten– the only region of the world with a continuous history of revolutionary upsets and radical political struggles that extend for somewhat more than the last century [...] here, and only here, do we find coalitions of governments and movements in a broad front of resistance to the new worldwide hegemony” (2004: 42).

Therefore, neither in Asia, nor in Africa we find movements as significant as in Latin America. This is still an unresolved matter. Anyway, the Forum constitutes a sphere of articulation of different national movements, strengthened so as to organize a global and national resistance against the prevailing order of inequality. Meiksins Wood says that this *new internationalism* is not based on a “[...] international civil society or global citizenship not very realistic, (...) but in the mutual support among various local and national movements who struggle against their own capitalisms and national States [...]” (2001: 84)

Legitimacy constitutes the central issue that guarantees the maintenance of any order in the long term. It is for this reason that the permanent action of discrediting the current order of inequality presented during these meetings could contribute to its modification. Walden Bello pointed this out, “[...] as the great Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci pointed out, when legitimacy has vanished and has not been recovered, it is just a matter of time until the structure collapses, no matter how strong it is at first sight [...]” (2001: 159).

We cannot assure what the results of these current strategies will be, but there is no doubt that this movement generates a feeling of generalized criticism in the different countries of the world as regards the current model of social polarization.

## Alternatives and Efficacy

Although the WSF has never produced an official document, there are proposals that collectively contribute to the discussion of alternatives to the neoliberal globalisation project. Three hundred and fifty proposals have been collected on the so-called Mural of Proposal<sup>7</sup>. Based on Houtart's (2000) classification, we enumerate a few points as the basis of the proposed alternatives. We add just a few examples in each one.

### *Economic Regulations:*

- A solution to the indebtedness of the developing countries.
- A tax on currency transactions as an element to establish democratic control over financial markets and lead to set up a global fund (global currency transaction tax campaign).
- The redefinition of the scope of the WTO, democratising its mechanisms for participation and decision-making.
- The reforms in Bretton Woods's institutions.
- The creation of a Social Bank.

### *Ecologic Regulations:*

- Exclude commercial logging in native forest where Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) production exists.
- Set up a public management model of natural resources.
- Establish the possibility to denounce pollutant companies.
- Include discussion of ecological issues in schools and universities syllabus
- Remove food and agricultural questions out of the WTO agreements.

### *Political Regulations:*

- Global democratisation (as a process opposed to any given model of democracy).
- United Nations (UN) reforms.
- International voluntary work.
- Alterglobalisation.
- Third Sector concentration.

### *Cultural Regulations:*

- Cultural diversity as a State policy.
- Human Rights education.
- Building of a partnership between science and society.
- Scholar-Action network.
- Respect for the Native traditional medicine.

Houtart, as well, developed four efficient conditions to the proposed alternatives:

1. Analysis of social reality, which means assessing society as a group of social relations.
2. Advancement around concrete objectives, taking into account the inner aims but enlarging them into general ones.
3. Right approach consisting in changing the method already known widened its scope.
4. Building of networks.

Considering Houtart's conditions and analysing them within the frame of the WSF, we are able to state that almost all the elements are there. However, although the goals are outlined, the solutions are not still very clear. It is important that concrete changing strategies should emerge from the Forum.

### **The International Council and the Antineoliberal Movement vs. Anticapitalist Movement: the Reform against the Revolution**

Every important movement has internal conflicts as regards its organisation and members. The WSF is not an exception. Among the broad spectrum of organizations, groups and networks that form this international unique movement there are different political and ideological trends, basically divided into two groups: the reformists and the radicals.

The proposals to *humanize* capitalism and struggle through dialogue and negotiation show a new strong presence on the part of the reformists. The main organizations representing this sector are ATTAC, Movement against Maastrich Europe (MAM), Citizen's Network for the Abolition of Foreign Debt (RCADE - Red Ciudadana por la Abolición de la Deuda Extern) and trade unionists, among others. These organizations are trying to keep the antineoliberal movement into the frame of the neoliberal criticism.

On the other hand, the radicals criticize the whole capitalist system, making it responsible for every problem that affects humanity. They want to use direct action and civil disobedience as a means of fighting against capitalism. But up to now they have not proposed an alternative to capitalism or its replacement. This position is represented by anticapitalist movements as Revolutionary Strategy, the Socialist Workers Party from Argentina, the Socialist Workers League from Mexico, among others.

In order to understand this phenomenon as a whole, it is important to explain the Forum's International Council<sup>8</sup>. The International Council is made up of about eighty people who represent powerful NGOs, different types of groups and social movements. Most of them are reformists, with the power to decide and project fundamental actions of the movement, but there are also radicals in the Forum, who participate in demonstrations.

In February 2000, the Forum's Brazilian Organizational Committee (Eight Brazilian organizations<sup>9</sup>) signed a cooperation agreement to achieve the WSF. Moreover, this Committee decided that neither political parties nor governments could participate in the Forum, except for civil entities. It would be an *ideas* event with no deliberative character and final document. In fact, although these Brazilian organisations constituted the main organ in the first Forum, every *institucionalized* direction of the antineoliberal movement -which is the real force in the Forum- was denied.

Five months later, the International Council (IC) was created. The first meeting took place in Dakar, Senegal from 9 to 11 June, 2001. During this meeting, its members approved a document settling its character, responsibilities, composition and functions. The International Council expresses its conception about the Forum as a:

"[...] permanent, long-term process, designed to build an international movement to bring together alternatives to neoliberal thinking in favour of a new

8 For further information about the International Council, see: [www.forumsocialmundial.org.br](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br).

9 These eight entities are: Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (ABONG), Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC); Brazilian Justice & Peace Commission (CBJP); Brazilian Business Association for Citizenship (CIVES); Central Trade Union Federation (CUT); Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Studies (IBASE); Centre for Global Justice (CJG); Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST).

social order, one that will foster contact among a multiplicity and diversity of proposals [...] Accordingly, the IC will be set up as a permanent body that will give continuity to the WSF beyond 2002, to consolidate the process of taking the WSF to the world level.”

This definition exposes the interest of the reformist trend to soothe the revolutionary one.

On the other hand, the IC clearly sets its position as permanent resource and leading organ: “The Council will play a leading role in defining policy guidelines and the WSFs strategic directions. National Organizing Committees will serve as organizers and facilitators in tandem with the IC.”

To achieve this objective, the Council *transfers* organizational attributions to the National Councils, but in articulation with the International one. These are some of the IC responsibilities:

- To formulate WSF strategies.
- To maintain ongoing contact with international movements, campaigns, initiatives, struggles and other events.
- To make the WSF become a familiar presence in their countries and regions, fostering widespread participation and debate on matters and proposals identified by the Forum.
- To promote and support WSF meetings, identifying potential sites and encouraging participation.
- To ensure reciprocal political, thematic and operational actions among World Social Forums.
- To promote and support the formation of Committees in their countries.
- To provide a structure to discuss topics, approaches, formats, identifications and invitations to lecturers, together with WSF Organizing Committees.
- To promote fund-raising.

The composition of the IC will obey the following criteria:

- Adherence to the Charter of Principles.
- Geographical and regional balance aimed at diversity.
- Sectorial participation: trade unions, social movements, NGOs and others.
- Participation through Heads of international and regional networks.
- Commitment to the continuity of the WSF, with responsibilities referred to above.
- No pre-set number of members.
- Participants will include representatives from international and regional entities and organizations and international networks and coordinators.

There will be two categories to participate in the International Council, with the right of audience guaranteed in each instance: a) Permanent members; b) Occasional guests and observers: Non-members whose participation is considered important at a given moment in the international situation or with regard to the WSF organizational dynamics.

As it is built with a nodal core with regional and sectorial unbalances (poor participation of African, Asian and Arabic world movements and groups, as well as young and black people, among others), the IC evaluates and approves the incorporation of new members.

It was this regional unbalance the reason why the Forum's Headquarter was moved to India. In connection with the sectorial unbalance, nobody can explain the lack of representation of young people in the IC, considering that

they are precisely the ones who constitute the movement and play an active role in every demonstration against neoliberal globalization.

There is no doubt that these movements against neoliberal globalisation, in general, and the WSF, in particular, need a new structure that allows them to carry out the idea of governability or a possible approximation to the power, in order to produce the necessary changes in the current neoliberal context. This structure should be oriented to the idea of changing the system, not merely of *humanizing* capitalism.

There is an atmosphere of great expectation on the next Forum in Venezuela. Probably, the IC would not do much in a country that is trying to take autonomous decisions.

### **Non-hegemonic concepts by the State: Policies and Declarations**

It is advisable to take into account that these Forums –made up by civil societies- have also counted on some state actors. However, it is essential to remind that the Forum's Organizational Committee decided not to invite political parties, parliamentary groups, or governing leaders, although some of them were included as citizens<sup>10/11</sup>.

We agree with Anderson when he argues the following: “[...] The discrepancies between governments and movements stand out, resisting hegemonic pretensions in the trade area –for example, defending MERCOSUR against the FTAA– cannot lead to very encouraging results, if at the same time the IMF and the financial markets are docilely obeyed in matters as crucial as interest rates, the fiscal standards, the pension system, the so-called primary surplus, not to mention responses to the popular demand for an egalitarian redistribution of land” (2004:45).

We would like to point out that some counter-hegemonic forces result from alliances among States or simply from state decisions opposing imposed recommendations.

These state-led counterhegemonic forces are clearly reflected on the Beijing Consensus -a concept built up by scholars to show China's opposition to the WC. Although China channels all of its efforts into the promotion of a commercial and financial liberalization, a strong State leadership has allowed Pekin to improve the typical faults of the model. In this way, China's model has been showing excellent results for many years, as it has located the State control over the superiority of the market and the private company, explaining the dichotomic model of socialist market economy.

“[...] The Chinese process of reform has had a special characteristic: it has not been the result of the inner system collapse, but attributable to a guided evolution within the framework of a politically regulated transition” (Cesarín, 2005:4).

The so-called Buenos Aires Consensus (16<sup>th</sup> October, 2003) shows how some States ally to counteract against the application of the W.C. and its terrible

10 Although the two main communist parties of India were involved in the organization of the Forum in Mumbai, the Workers' Party of Brazil has been visible in many ways in Porto Alegre, and the presence of Hugo Chavez –Venezuela's President- in the last Forum caused ebullience in the two Forums.

11 In the Charter of Principles of the WSF it is established that: “[...] The World Social Forum is a plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context that, in a decentralized fashion, interrelates organizations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels from the local to the international to build another world [...] Neither party representations nor military organizations shall participate in the Forum. Government leaders and members of legislatures who accept the commitments of this Charter may be invited to participate in a personal capacity [...]”. The whole text of this document can be seen at: [www.forumsocialmundial.org.br](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br)

consequences. Among others<sup>12</sup> we find the so-called Buenos Aires Consensus. The Presidents of Argentina and Brazil proposed to strengthen the role of the State in the economic process, to support development policies which adjust themselves to regional features, to participate in World Forums as MERCOSUR members, as well as to condemn unilateral international actions without the United Nations' approval.

Thus, is it possible to consider the Buenos Aires Consensus as a counter-hegemonic force? In its declaration<sup>13</sup> -point 16-, the Presidents express that: "[...] Greater decision autonomy will allow us to face more effectively the destabilizing movements of the speculative financial capital and the opposed interests of the most developed blocs [...]".

In this background, the Buenos Aires Consensus is also clearly opposed to the W.C., which has defined the economic neoliberal model our countries have followed. President Lula said: "[...] I have great faith that the Buenos Aires Consensus could be a sort of antidote to the Washington Consensus [...]".

As it was previously explained, the State is presented as a strategic instrument to achieve the national objectives in both Consensus.

The basic idea of the Beijing and Buenos Aires Consensus lies in a total distrust on the benefits of the privatization processes and free trade, without a minimum control from the States. If the State participates, the countries will be integrated in the global economic system in a more autonomus way, safeguarding their life style, looking for their own solutions and keeping their national interest protected. The aim is to grow while preserving independence and sovereignty in the decision-making process.

Probably, the Argentinian and Brazilian cancellation of the debt held with the Monetary Fund would allow these countries to do so.

## Final Comments

The tendency towards social exclusion and the inestimable social cost suffered by impoverished countries owing to the payment of unfair and illegitimate external debts are among the issues that are gradually losing legitimacy and facing a growing resistance. This is also the case with respect to the demands requiring limitations to the transnational corporations and summoning financial capitals to protect thousands of people, whether injured or unemployed workers. Finally, the situation of extreme poverty and illness undergone by most of the population makes inevitable the discredit of a political and economic model that deepens the inequalities and provokes a greater social polarization. In Anderson's words: "[...] The role of social movements becomes decisive. Only their ability to mobilize the masses, the peasants workers, informal and precarious workers and employees who combat wavering and opportunistic governments –if necessary, without truce– can ensure more egalitarian and fair social policies" (2004: 45).

On the other hand, sometimes *hegemony* is confused with a natural order of things, like a *jure* principle. But at the moment that the only Superpower demands for itself the right to use the military force, it becomes illegitimate, owing to the rupture of consensus that consolidates the foundations of the postwar international system. Irrespective of Gramsci's hegemony concept<sup>14</sup>, the use of

12 Another alliances among States are also important to summarize the counteract forces against hegemonic forces and projects, as Bolivarian Alternative to America (ALBA), G-20, et cetera.

13 The Declaration can be read in: <http://www.resdal.org/ultimos-documentos/consenso-bsas.html>

14 Gramsci considers the hegemony not only as an imposed phenomenon but also as the capacity of the powerful to establish and preserve an intellectual and moral leadership without using the military force (Acanda, 2002: 244).

coercion shows -in the middle and long term- regional and global fragilities and contradictions with the imperial strategy supported by the military force, in open confrontation with the legality and search of legitimacy.

However, although the neoliberalism as a hegemonic doctrine is facing a crisis and the United States as a Superpower is being criticized, nobody will confuse lack of consensus with triumph over them.

Nevertheless, this is the first time in our history that an international movement joins millions of people around the world claiming against oppression and injustice. And this is a good starting point. In a declaration against war (after 11-M Terrorist Attack in Madrid), José Saramago -Novel Literature Prize- expressed that there are two Superpowers: the United States and You (referring to the Civil Society); so, we should take this into account to recognize our power to change the things that should be changed.

The WSF, as the biggest global resistance movement, has the responsibility to struggle against the emergence of a world order combining war with an illegitimate neoliberal globalization. Even though the social and political forces have not yet overcome the current challenges, tasks and responsibilities, this movement represents the only democratization vector of the international policy nowadays.

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