The Global Justice Movement/s in Europe
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Democracy and Transnational Networks
in Global Justice Movements

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1. Introduction and summary

This paper aims to offer a conceptual contribution to the understanding of transnational networks that have developed within the global justice movements in relation to the issue of democracy. While other research in the Demos project concentrates on the national level, this paper focuses on the transnational and global dimension of the global justice movements. In particular, it analyses the specificity of transnational networks, as distinct from domestic mobilisations, in terms of political environment, strategic role, and actors’ characteristics. Networks are characterised as *global* in relation to the issues they tackle, the political centres of power they challenge, the way they are constituted and operate.

Central to this paper is the issue of democracy, intended both in the context of the global system - how transnational decision making on global issues takes place - and in the context of civil society - how transnational networks and social movement debate, deliberate and carry out their activities.

The paper investigates four main issues: concepts, characteristics, mechanisms, and outcomes of the activities of transnational networks in the global justice movements. In the next section, on concepts, transnational networks and the wider global justice movements are set in the context of the relationships, at the global scale, between the spheres of politics, economy and society. Definitions are provided of the emerging global civil society, of the global movements that operate within it, and of the transnational networks that have emerged as the backbone of movements. The principles and practice of democracy in the global system and in civil society are also discussed. The project of globalization from below that characterises a large part of global activism is introduced, and contrasted with the dominant project of neoliberal globalization and with other strategies for adapting to global processes. Within this context, the political meaning of transnational networks is defined as forces for change at the global level, demanding democracy to the state system and economic and social justice to the economic system.

In section 3, transnational networks are analysed in their fundamental characteristics. The examination of the values and identities of the networks, as shared principled ideas, leads to the analysis of their political visions embedded in a wider context of projects of social change that emerge in parallel to the development of global movement activism. Some of these characteristics are widely present in global movements and are a precondition for the rise of particular networks, while other aspects evolve and mature through the very process of network building, influencing in turn the wider context of global movements. Within this context, political challenges and key actors are discussed, highlighting the specificity of transnational networks vs. the traditional practice of domestic coalition building.
In section 4, the functioning mechanisms of transnational networks are studied in terms of the "internal" network dynamics and of the "proximate" relationship between networks and the broader global justice movements, addressing the issue of democracy within civil society. Why and how do networks emerge as a specific form of communication, organisation, activism and strategy for political change within the broader context of global movements? What are the activities that networks carry out within the world of civil society? What are the democratic processes of deliberation, discussion, consensus building, egalitarian participation and joint construction of political agendas and campaigns that shape (or may be missing) in transnational networks?

Networks are built when a set of preconditions exist, in terms of values, identities and political projects, and when a critical mass of organisations and individuals from a large number of countries agree on the general "frame" and on the specific focus of the network, as well as on the process shaping its development. Its "internal" dynamics is determined by the strategic decisions of national, social and political actors to enter, stay or leave a network.

Networks activities are directed, on the one hand, to the "proximate" world of civil society and to the global justice movements and, on the other hand to the "external" world of global political and economic powers, discussed below. In the former activities, networks build legitimacy through the involvement of key civil society organisations in different national contexts and present themselves as a legitimate advocate of voiceless and yet general interests, reclaiming a role in the public space.

The "external" activities of transnational networks are addressed in section 5, with the campaigns directed to economic and political centres of power, as well as to public opinion, demanding democracy in the global system. The focus of the analysis here is on the strategies that are developed - protest, pressure, proposals and alternative practices - and on the outcomes of networks activities. The way economic and political centres of global power have responded to the demands of social movements shows the impact they have had and the actual possibility of democratisation of the global system. The final task of this section is the consideration of a set of indicators for measuring the impact of transnational networks that could be used in the rest of the research to test in practice and through the web surveying the actual democratic outcome of the transnational networks under scrutiny.

In section 6, the concepts and frames developed in the previous sections are used in order to provide a historical overview of the emergence of transnational networks. It is shown that the origins of transnational social movements and networks of organisations active on international issues lie in the movements that have developed since the 1970s around the themes of peace, human rights, solidarity, development, ecology, and women’s issues. A wave of state summits began in the mid-1970s, spurred by far-reaching political change and by economic developments. As global issues and supranational decision-making power became increasingly important, attention and action by civil society also increased. Moving on from traditional efforts to put pressure on nation-states, attention started to focus on global problems and on the failure of states to address them in events such as summits. Different streams of cross-border activism, dating from the 1970s, are analysed here. They include the activities of international NGOs operating in several countries; the growth of parallel summits organised at meetings of international institutions; the emergence of international civil society meetings, and most recently, the appearance of global days of actions organised by the global justice movements.
The conclusions, in section 7, summarise the frame of operation, the challenge and the strategies of transnational networks in the global justice movements.

2. Concepts

2.1. Global politics, economy and society

Many studies of political mobilisations, economic conflicts and social movements developed around global issues have tried to understand them by extending in various directions the model of *national* social movements to a context of (limited) transnational actions. While there is no shortage of empirical cases that fall into the pattern of a limited transnationalisation of domestic activism, we believe that this approach is unable to capture the fundamental novelty of the global mobilisations on global issues of the last two decades, that have become mass social movements at least since 1999. In this section we outline the key concepts that are needed, in our view, to address and understand global movements.

Figure 1. Global politics, economy and society: the relationships between different spheres

The global activism of the last two decades has to be understood in the context of the evolving relationships between the spheres of politics, economy and society on global issues, resulting from the increasing international integration that has emerged since the 1980s. Figure 1 summarises the key concepts and relationships that we consider as useful starting points for the analysis.
At the global level, the sphere of *politics* is structured by the inter-state system, where national states, international and supranational institutions exercise their power. While at the national level the political relationships between state and citizens have been defined by constitutions, law and democratic processes, at the global level no universally coercive power of law has yet emerged, and no democratic processes of participation, deliberation and vote have developed for the world citizens. Leaving aside the problems resulting from the lack of global democracy, that will be addressed below, at the global level the operation of the politics has tried to develop new rules for economic and social activities, appropriate for the new context of globalization.

The sphere of the economy is structured, at the global level, by the operation of firms and markets, dominated by the search for profits and by a drive to turn into commodities an increasingly wide array of activities previously provided and regulated by states and society, from knowledge to education and health, from public services to global public goods such as water and environmental protection. The resulting privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation have characterised since the 1980s the model of neoliberal globalization that has asserted the power of markets and large industrial and financial firms over decisions made in the political sphere and over social behaviours.

At the global level, the web of social activities can be characterised as an emerging global civil society, defined as follows:

> the emerging global civil society can be defined as the sphere of cross-border relationships and activities carried out by collective actors - social movements, networks and civil society organisations - that are independent from governments and private firms, operating outside the international reach of states and markets¹.

Demands that have emerged here vis-à-vis the political and economic spheres can be summarised as follows: a) demands by global civil society for global democracy, human rights and peace to the state system; b) demands by global civil society for global economic justice to the economic system; and c) demands by global civil society for global social justice and environmental sustainability to both systems. Conversely, both the state and the economic systems have put pressure on global civil society to adhere to their own values and norms.

At the national level, modern definitions of civil society have emphasised its separation and autonomy from both the state and the economy and have looked at it as the contested terrain where hegemonic projects are developed. Since the 1980s, a growing networking, activism and social mobilisation has addressed global issues, defended fundamental rights and advocated change in a transnational perspective. The demands and activities of civil society moved beyond their interaction with the national political and economic spheres, and challenged political and economic power across and above national

¹ A growing literature has addressed the definition of civil society, from its origins in Ferguson, Hegel, Tocqueville, to the critique of Marx, and the modern meaning emerging with Gramsci (Bobbio 1976; Gramsci 1971). See (Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor 2001; Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor 2002; Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor 2003; Chandhoke 2003; Cohen and Arato 1992; Falk 1992; Falk 1999; Kaldor 2003; Lipschutz 1992; Pianta 2001, 171). According to the UNRISD definition, “Civil Society is a complex social arena, with individuals and groups organized in various forms of associations and networks in order to express their views and fulfil their interests. They could constitute anything from a global advocacy movement down to a village self-help group.” (UNRISD 2003, 1).
borders, questioning some fundamental aspects of the nature of the inter-state system and of the global economy. The increasing transnational nature, vision, scope and activities of civil society have made it possible to identify a growing field of activism with a distinctly global frame, identity and scale of operation. The autonomy from the territorially bound nature of sovereign states has made it possible for civil society (and, more precisely, for major actors within it) to define itself on the basis of values and identities that transcend national/state loyalties, to act on global issues and to co-ordinate action across boundaries.

2.2. Global social movements

The view of the emerging global civil society as a sphere of relationships among highly heterogeneous actors leaves the field open for a more focused definition of different types of mobilisations on the global challenges addressed by civil society. Global social movements are the key actors of protest within global civil society, and we can now propose a tentative definition, trying to integrate the different approaches discussed in the Demos project:

global social movements are cross border, sustained, and collective social mobilisations on global issues, based on permanent and/or occasional organisations, networks and campaigns with a transnational coordination, moving from shared values and identities, challenging and protesting economic or political power, campaigning for change in global issues. They share a global frame of the problems, have a global scope of action and may target supranational or national targets.

The focus of the analysis in the rest of the paper - and in the Demos project - is on the global social movements that have challenged the dominant model of relationship between global politics, economy and society, that can be defined as neoliberal globalization.

2.3. The global justice movements

While a great variety of different mobilisations can be identified in this area, we will refer to them with the general term of global justice movements, because all of them share values and identities opposed to neoliberal globalization, they have woven together and increasingly tight network of coalitions and campaigns and they have regularly met and planned initiatives in major global events, from a long series of parallel summits to the sequence of World (and regional) Social For a.

2 Della Porta and Diani (della Porta and Diani 1999) suggest that (national) social movements are defined by four key aspects: informal interaction networks, shared beliefs and solidarity, collective action focusing on conflicts, use of protest. The above definition focuses on global issues and movements as distinct from simply transnational ones. According to Sidney Tarrow (Tarrow 2001, 11), transnational social movements are “socially mobilized groups with constituents in at least two states, engaged in sustained contentious interactions with power-holders in at least one state other than their own, or against an international institution, or a multinational economic actor”.

3 The importance of social movements in the global system had been pointed out by (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989). The emergence of global social movements is examined, among a rapidly glowing literature, by (Amin and Houtart 2002; Andretta, della Porta, Mosca and Reiter 2002; Broad and Heckscher 2003; de Sousa Santos 2003; della Porta and Tarrow 2004; Grzybowski 2000; Houtart and Polet 1999; Klein
strategies that can be identified within the global justice movements will be discussed in section 4, whereas a historical reconstruction of major developments and events of the global justice movements will be provided in section 6.

The emergence of the global justice movements can be traced in two processes: the move of activism from the national to the global scale, and its broadening from single issue mobilisations of individual organisations to a more comprehensive view and understanding of the challenges raised by neoliberal globalization. Its origins lie in the social movements developed around the themes of peace, human rights, solidarity, development, ecology, labour, and women’s issues. Starting with their own specific issues, they have developed an ability to address problems of a global nature, build information networks, stage actions, find self-organised solutions across national borders, interacting in original ways with the new sites of supranational power.

2.4. Transnational networks

A final, important definition concerns transnational networks. Within the global justice movements, a global network can be defined as follows:

*a global network is a permanent coordination among different civil society organisations (and sometimes individuals, such as experts), located in several countries, based on a shared frame for one specific global issue, developing joint campaigns and social mobilisations against common targets at national or supranational level.*

Transnational networks are key actors with a major role in terms of aggregation of social forces, development of common identities, formulation of campaigning strategies, and implementation of political struggles. In the last two decades, cross border networks of civil society organisations have been the most typical actor promoting political and economic change on global issues. Transnational networks can thus be considered as the backbone of social movements engaged in the political struggle for global justice.

Transnational networks are usually characterised for their advocacy function toward the promotion of normative change in society, but they may also carry out alternative practices (such as fair trade) that are largely separated from the spheres of global politics and the global economy. While transnational networks' success in promoting change will be discussed in section 5 of this paper, for the moment suffices to hold that “when they succeed, advocacy networks are among the most important sources of new ideas, norms, and identities in the international system” (Keck and Sikkink 1998, X).

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As in the national context, network activists work on the assumption that their action can make a difference, that the context in which they live can be modified by the political struggles brought forward by especially sensitive actors. In this vein, transnational relations are considered as an area of struggle in which different actors compete for a number of differing aims ultimately concerning the acceptance and implementation of their normative vision of social reality (Risse-Kappen 1995).
The main reason for focusing on transnational networks in this analysis of global social movements is that, differently from the national case, the actors drawn together by activism do not easily share the same issue frames, political cultures, repertoires of action, nor a language, in most cases, for that matter. Within a national civil society, the common language, culture and experience makes the rise of collective action easier, involving both organisations and individuals, with a highly informal pattern and fuzzy edges of the movement. At the global level, such common ground cannot be taken for granted and has to be slowly built by deliberate, long term efforts of organisations with substantial resources. In the case of the global justice movements, the complexity of global issues and the resources needed for acting on them are major barriers to entry in the field of global activism. Transnational networks, building on shared values, identities, mutual trust and common visions and strategies among organisations of different countries, have represented a major way for lowering such barriers and allowing a broader participation to global campaigns.

This is not to say that all global movements need transnational networks, nor that networks are a sufficient condition for the emergence of global social movements. Cross border mobilisations may develop on "backbones" different from organisation-based networks, assuming different forms, models and duration (an example may be Internet-based global campaigns). The experience of civil society organisations is also full of international coordinations that have never grasped the challenge of global issues, nor led to broader social mobilisations (an example may be the international trade union movement).

2.5. Democracy in the global system

Democracy is a crucial element in all the above discussion. The concepts and practices of democracy have assumed their more advanced formulation in the constitutions, laws and practices of democratic states, where equal citizens elect and control a sovereign, legitimate and accountable government, and participate to democratic processes, both deliberative and decisional, through a rich variety of social and political mechanisms, including political parties, trade unions and civil society organisations, the media and public opinion, etc.

At the global level very few traces of democracy resembling the national dynamics can be found. The inter-state system is made of unequal states whose external relations do not follow the democratic principles that may be present within them. Powerful states make decisions that affect the lives of citizens in other countries. Individuals have no status as citizens of the world, and their fundamental human rights are only now starting to be recognised as worth protecting beyond the boundaries of sovereign states. Supranational institutions and the United Nations system are designed as inter-state organisations, with narrow missions and limited resources. Citizens’ votes and individual voices can never reach the international decision makers, and on global issues there is no resort to transnational parties, world trade unions, or a global public opinion. Moreover, major decisions on global issues are made, outside the sphere of politics, by large industrial and financial corporations that wield economic power and control global markets; they have influenced national and supranational policies to follow the model of neoliberal globalization.
What all global decision-makers have in common is that they have not been elected and are not accountable to the people affected by their decisions. The absolute lack of democracy is a fundamental failure of the present global system and the deepest feature of neoliberal globalization.

The rise of global social movements in the past two decades has largely been about this lack of global democracy, as well as about calls for economic and social justice. Investigating the emergence, development and outcomes of the mobilisations for democracy by global social movements is at the centre of this paper, and of the Demos project.

The question of democracy in the global system can be examined from several perspectives. From the perspective of political theory, a growing gap can be identified between the socio-economic reality, that is transnational in its operation and effects, and the political system, which is still fundamentally anchored to a state-centred, model. Increasingly, decisions taken in one country affect people in other countries who do not have the possibility to express their voice because of their subaltern status as non-fellow, *ergo* disenfranchised, citizens. Production, investment, finance, trade, the environment, migration, health, and security are key examples of how the link between actions and consequences extends across borders. And yet those who bear the effects of decisions taken abroad are not typically entitled to have a political voice in the process (Archibugi, Held and Köhler 1998; Bello 2002; Cutler 2003; Falk 1995; Held 1995; McGrew 1997; Monbiot 2003; Stiglitz 2002, 18-22).

A state-based political system remains an unsatisfactory framework for addressing global issues and providing global public goods. Global politics is still largely the domain of inter-state relations, and in spite of the large production of international rules, treaties and agreements on a growing spectrum of global issues, the ability of the system to effectively address them has remained modest. In many cases, there is a lack of supranational institutions with a clear mandate to address specific problems; in other cases agreed upon rules and treaties are made ineffective by the failure to comply and act by states.

In this, the political participation of the public is very limited indeed. Both in cases where decisions taken in a given country have border-crossing consequences, and in those where decisions taken at the international level have correspondingly international effects, most often the grassroots political agent, who bears the consequences, does not have significant power to register his or her ‘trans-border consent’ (or, indeed, dissent). Assuming she or he has the power to register her or his consent at the domestic level (which is rarely the case), she or he nevertheless does not have a voice at all in the domestic decisions of other countries and has little voice in international fora, even when they are public. In public international organisations, the only political voice available to him or her is through the double representation offered by national parliaments, which (if entitled) subsequently elect international representatives with differing effective powers. Should one come from a poor country, in fact, he or she can expect to have an especially weak voice in the intergovernmental organisations. Using these observations as a starting point, one can

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6 A state-based system also fails to assure the self-determination of trans-border interests such as those embodied by non-national or trans-national political agents like migrants, minorities, etc. (Scholte 2004, 22).
argue that current international affairs are characterised by a high degree of exclusion and disenfranchisement (Marchetti 2005).

From the perspective of international political theory, the dichotomy of political exclusion vs. political engagement highlights a crucial element of political incompleteness in the current political arrangements at the international level. From a normative perspective, the inclusion of vulnerable agents into public and impartial decision-making processes at the international level represents a unique chance to improve the democratic legitimacy of the entire political system, both domestically and globally. The widely accepted creed of democracy remains in fact fundamentally flawed unless it is complemented with both a grassroots and an international dimension of democratic participation. No democratic regime can be truly democratic until a criterion is found that allows for the justifiable delimitation of the "membership" entitled to participation in decision making on cross border issues, according to constituencies that effectively reflect global public interests, rather than the national boundaries of states, or the private ones of corporations. In order to respond to the democratic deficit characterising the current political system, transnational networks represents central actors for ending the resulting unjust exclusion of a vast portion of the world population from transnational decision-making processes.

Global social movements can thus provide an important contribution to democratising the global system, but the reflection on the practical forms this may take, and on the ways global civil society may be part of this process, has just begun. For instance, it has yet to be debated whether global civil society should have a voice of protest, a voice of advice, a vote or a veto on decisions of global powers on global issues. A key question is how states and supranational institutions could formally recognise the role of civil society on global issues, granting its organisations the right to have a voice (outside or inside the rooms of power?) on global issues, as members, for example, of the delegations of national representatives to UN bodies, regional organizations (such as the EU) and international conferences; some very initial steps in this direction have already been taken in the case of the UN. One century ago the same route was taken by the labor unions when they obtained formal recognition for the representation of workers from governments and employers.

2.6. Democracy in global civil society

The principles and practices of democracy are relevant well beyond the global system. For social and political actors claiming to represent general interests and demanding a democratisation of global decision making, the democratic nature of the deliberative processes and decisions on collective actions within global civil society is equally essential. Democracy within civil society has a fundamentally different meaning than democracy in global politics. It has to do with participation more than with representation; it has to account for changing identities and evolving social actors rather than deal with well defined citizens; it has to accommodate diversity alongside the equality of individuals.

Democracy within global social movements and networks does not stop at the formal rules about membership of organisations, elections and accountability of leaders, representation in decision making bodies. It has to take up the challenge of favouring the participation of individuals and groups across the world, of including them in the
procedures for deliberation of networks, of developing a method of consensus building rather than majority voting on key decisions, of practicing mutual understanding and compromise among organisations representing different actors.

Within civil society, contrary to what happens in the political sphere, organisations and networks do not claim to have exclusive representation of fundamental values and interests and so far have no ‘vote’ in global decision-making. This means that they do not need to behave as representative and accountable democratic bodies in the way that is required for exclusive representation and decision-making power (such as in government policy-making). However, as the power of civil society to influence decisions grows, the question can be raised on how far can it go without coming to terms with the problem of representativeness and legitimacy. What are the boundaries, in other words, between public interest advocacy and a more systematic representation of interests?

More generally, a growing attention will have to be paid to the appropriate mechanisms assuring that the process of decision making within global civil society is legitimate, transparent and representative. For transnational networks this is a matter of survival, as they can retain and attract member organisations only insofar as they are perceived as legitimate, inclusive and indeed democratic, as well as effective in terms of their objectives.

2.7. Globalization from below

It can be argued that a vision of a globalization from below underpins the mobilisations of cross border social movements demanding global democracy and economic and social justice. As argued elsewhere (Pianta 2001; Pianta 2001; Pianta 2003), the dominant project of neoliberal globalization has been challenged by the project of globalization from below, based on the core values of peace, justice, democracy, protection of rights, advanced in the activities of civil society organisations and social movements advocating change, opposing current policies, and proposing alternative solutions to global issues.

The rise of global social movements is, at the same time, a practice of globalization from below and a manifestation of the importance of such a vision for addressing global problems. This perspective challenges the power of markets and states. It represents a hegemonic project aiming at restraining the rule of the market and the sovereignty of states, in the name of universal rights - human, political, social and economic ones. Globalization from below aims to empower civil society and provides spaces for self-organisation, but at

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7 According to Falk, who has introduced the concept, globalization from below has the potential to "conceptualise widely shared world order values: minimising violence, maximising economic well-being, realising social and political justice, and upholding environmental quality" (Falk 1999, 130). See also (Brecher and Costello 1993; Brecher, Costello and Smith 2000; Pianta 2001; Pianta 2001; Pianta and Silva 2003). A similar perspective, although with different concepts, is in (de Sousa Santos 2003; Sen, Anand, Escobar and Waterman 2004). A comparative perspective is in (Archibugi 2003; Held and McGrew 2002).

8 Between neoliberal globalization and globalization from below, a project of globalization of rights and responsibilities, had been advanced in the 1980s and 1990s, aiming at redefining the international rules of a more integrated world and supported by "enlightened" national governments and some UN agencies (Pianta 2001b; 2001a). The relevance of the vision of globalization from below among civil society organisations is documented in (Pianta and Silva 2003).
the same time calls for a different *quality* of global policies that may extend and generalise such an empowerment. Thus, it demands nothing less than a reconfiguration of the relationships between the spheres of the economy, politics and civil society. Globalization from below demands a new generation of policies by governments and international institutions putting at the centre not just the affirmation of rights, but their implementation in economic and social relations; not just the principle of democracy, but its introduction in international decision making and its development in a participatory perspective. Globalization from below calls for addressing the roots of global injustice and inequality in the market system.

The strength of such a vision will be considered again when discussing the strategies of global social movements.

3. Characteristics of transnational networks

3.1. Values and identities

Transnational networks within the global justice movements are characterised by a set of common beliefs and values which define their political identity. Network activists are usually motivated by shared principled ideas and interpret their role as a fully political, non-profit attitude. The normative aspects of global social movements, and of transnational networks in particular, are particularly illustrative of a double and reciprocal dynamics. In this, universal principles encounter values and norms fostered from below resulting in an unpredictable and creative normative combination.

Transnational networks foster a number of fundamental principles which, despite being originated in a specific cultural context, can be shared by culturally diverse actors. These principles typically include equality, justice, peace, human rights, environmental protection.

Alongside these fundamental principles, value pluralism is expressed by the differing norms emerging from below, from grassroots movements, which serve as sources of credibility for the project of normative persuasion pushed by transnational networks. While the matching of these two normative domains, global and local, can be an extremely progressive mechanism for modifying power positions and unjust situations, it can also hide a presumption of cultural imperialism. In order to avoid this risk, awareness of such danger is stimulated, together with a strengthening of the importance of the local component.

Accordingly, a common, normative strategy to disseminate fundamental principles and to enhance the encounter between universal and local values consists of the deployment

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9 Within the US literature, this marks a distinction from three differing types of networks, which transnational networks are keen to emphasize. Networks in the global justice movement are distinct from scientific (truth-seeking), private firms (money-seeking), and governments (power-seeking) networks, for they are not inspired by principled ideas (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 30; Ness and Brechin 1988). Despite being also indirectly motivated by the search for truth, money and power, social advocacy networks are primarily identified by their normative-political content. When this is confirmed, a prediction can be made on the likelihood that global social networks raise where there is an issue that is value-intense.

10 The values that are most likely to be adopted by transnational networks are then values whose legitimacy trans-borders distinct domains of normativity. See (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 76).
of the adjacency principle (Tilly 2001). According to the latter, an appeal is made to fundamental principles that are already accepted in other spheres and cases, and an extension to new circumstances is proposed through an appeal to an impartial analogy. Such value transportation provides the mechanism that allows for influencing other sphere of action, both domestically and transnationally. However, since each cultural context is modelled on different values, the result varies because the encounter generated by the norm’s transportation does not guarantee an unconditional acceptance in the receiving community. Moreover, even the "sending" cultural domain can be influenced in turn, thus changing those principles that are claimed to be universal. In both cases of change, the normative interaction between diverse cultural-political context produces a new identity, which is fundamental for the promotion of normative change in the political realm (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

The coexistence of the appeal to common ideals and to specific, local norms and values, in fact, explains also the possibility of feeling of being involved in collective action without having to belong to a specific organisation or a unitary movement. While more on the specific features of this kind of organisational form will be provided in a later section, here imports to stress that pluralism within networks is allowed by the simultaneous presence of differing perspectives of action, informed by local motivational sources, and a shared appeal to ultimate values which is collective and public.

3.2. Politics and opportunities

The interaction between the set of values shared by social movements and the global political and economic realities leads to the emergence of different projects of political change, rooted in particular opportunity structures.

In national contexts, social movements are rooted in thick web of social relations and common identities, have access to important resources (human, financial, etc.), but operate in highly formalised political systems that constrain their mobilisation and impact. Conversely, at the global level social movements and transnational networks face major obstacles and costs in building up cross border relationships among civil society organisations with different cultures and languages, and have access to highly limited resources, but face a political system where the lack of democracy and the innumerable failures to address global problems represent as many opportunities for cross border mobilisations.

Moreover, the lack of a rigid, well defined institutional setting similar to the national one widens the options for political action. When there is a low degree of conflict and some institutional alliances are possible, "vertical coalitions" on selected global issues may emerge, with civil society organisations that may cooperate, or at least establish a dialogue, with particular supranational organisations (usually of the UN system), with some "progressive" governments or regional bodies, such as the European Union. When conflict is strong, on the other hand, it can be easily directed to the highest level, to core of the global decision making (as in the case of G8 protests), with a highly visible and effective challenge. In both cases, the results are greater opportunities for transnational networks to emerge as a legitimate and authoritative voice for global interests, extending their impact on public opinion and on civil society organisations interested in joining transnational networks and mobilisations.
Different opportunities are likely to be pursued by different organisations and networks within global movements. Again, it is important here to consider the heterogeneity of actors, of the fields of interest and of the political projects that may coexist within global civil society. The combination of "subjective" characteristics of social movements, such as values, identities, and political visions, and of "objective" political opportunities on global issues has led to identify a variety of streams within global social movements. On the basis of their attitude towards economic globalization, the following typology has been proposed (Pianta 2001; Pianta 2001):

a) reformists with the aim to 'civilise' globalization;

b) radical critics with a different project for global issues;

c) alternatives who self-organise activities outside the mainstream of the state and market systems.

d) resisters of neoliberal globalization, who strive for a return to local and national spheres of action, though with an open attitude of fair interchange.

This range of analytical perspectives is typical of social movements and, and we can find it also within the global justice movements, sometime with a certain degree of overlapping. Outside the movement, we can find in global civil society two additional perspectives:

e) supporters of the current neoliberal order, stressing the benefits brought by globalization;

f) rejectionist of global processes, favouring a return to a national dimension, often with a reactionary, nostalgic attitude.

Such a typology is centred on the political characterisation of social movements and is based on their interaction with the political sphere and political forces. It may be useful for understanding the interaction of values and opportunities in a comparative perspective in a given conjuncture, more than for charting the evolving identities within civil societies over time, that are bound to change their relationship to global and national politics. And the issue of change leads us now into the discussion of the mechanism of functioning of transnational networks.

4. Mechanisms of transnational networks

4.1. Change and challenges

At the core of the mechanisms leading to the emergence and operation of transnational networks there is the perception of the possibility of change in one specific global issue. The mainstream literature is divided along two alternative readings of social change concerning political issues: the positivist and constructivist approach. According to the positivist approach, political issues pre-exist to political action for they occur in the social context as formed by historical power positions and individual preferences. Their existence, together with an antagonistic perception of one of the involved actors, explains the occurrence of political struggle. In opposition to this is the constructivist model, according to which political issues do not have an independent nature, but are the product of social struggle. This perspective maintains that political players looking for change aim
at re-shaping the terms of the conflict and indeed at generating the conflict itself though the social formation of the issue at stake.

When the global issues addressed by the global justice movements are considered, neither approach appears to be satisfactory. On the one hand, global issues have been progressively identified, conceptualised and addressed as new political challenges in the context of the UN world conferences and of several international initiatives since the 1970s in which civil society has largely been involved and in fact has found an appropriate environment to grow in its networking and activism (Pianta 2004). On the other hand, once large social movements have developed within civil society on global issues, their conceptualisation and their political meaning has indeed been reshaped by the ability of movements to define the terms of their own agenda, world vision, and prospects for change.

A crucial challenge for any global network starting a specific campaign consists of shaping the issue at stake in the public sphere, in such a way that it is perceived as problematic, urgent, and soluble. The initial, key issue in this task is production and internal exchange of information. ‘Overcoming the deliberative suppression of information that sustain so many abuses of power, network can help reframe international and domestic debates, changing their terms, their sites, and the configuration of participants’ (Keck and Sikkink 1998, X). In particular, transnational networks often serve here as facilitators for providing space to actors who are usually voiceless and excluded. Transnational networks can project and amplify local voices globally, multiply the channel of access to the international system, so that these voices can in turn return to the original local place strengthened. In this regard, transnational networks are most likely to have a significant impact in terms of enhancing local resources through making international resources available to domestic actors, when the issue at stake is informationally-poor and needs to be explained and disseminated widely. The production of information is a primary step in the long process in which transnational networks argue, document, persuade, strategize, protest, lobby or propose alternatives.

Following the production of information, the second step consists in the external dissemination and strategic use of it. This is the crucial stage for it is here that the information acquires a fully public dimension, thus a political significance. It is not enough to generate information inside the circles of the transnational networks, for it needs to reach the external public in order to make this producing, in turn, pressure on institutional actors for normative change. Global public opinion thus needs to be attracted and its imagination captured for framing the terms of the conflict in such a way that the issue at stake becomes associated to a general interest which requires a public engagement.

This dynamics replicates a situation that social movements already face at the domestic level. The struggle to occupy public space is a struggle about framing the conflict and the terms of debate. Both in the domestic and the international case, activists seek to develop a common frame of meaning which is antagonist to the present reading of the issue at stake. “Each of these campaigns began with an idea that was almost unimaginable, even by its early proponents. That they could abolish slavery, gain vote for women, or end footbinding hardly seemed possible. One of the main tasks that social movements undertake, however, is to make possible the previously unimaginable, by framing problems in such a way that their solution comes to appear inevitable. The case of female circumcision reminds us that such changes are neither obvious nor linear. They are the contingent result of contestations over meaning and resources waged by specific actors in a
specific historical context” (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 40-1). And yet producing and disseminating information in the public domain is not enough for the achievement of the political objective of the transnational networks. In order to promote norms change a third step is necessary.

The third step in the process of shaping the challenge is the projection of one’s self as a legitimate representative of the general interests involved in the issue at stake. The task consists here in the appropriation of a recognised role in the public space, as rightful advocate of general interest. To the question ‘in the name of whom you speak?’, transnational networks offer a response in term of reclaiming for themselves the representation of general interests. This is particularly significant in the international context, in which the representation of interest is stretched to such a point of risking to be lost in the several passages of delegation. The distance of the decision-bearer from the decision-makers is so wide and loose that the former does not have any concrete tool to influence the decisions that affect him or her (Held 1995; Marchetti 2005). Contrasting this exclusionary situation, transnational networks claim to be a more legitimate representative of the interests at stake in the international decision than the traditional/institutional actors. By producing, disseminating, and reclaiming the representation of general interests, transnational networks thus widen democratic participation in global politics.

Once organisations and social movements succeed in shaping a particular challenge associated to global issues where change is possible, the political opportunity for mobilising and network building arises.

4.2. Networking

Transnational networks are forms of organisation characterised by voluntary and horizontal patterns of co-ordination, which are reciprocal and asymmetrical (Anheier and Themudo 2002; Keck and Sikkink 1998; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Risse-Kappen 1994; Tarrow 1996). Flexibility and fluidity are two major features of the network organisational form. A flexible organisational structure enhances the capacity to adapting effectively to changing social circumstances and political situations. Fluid organisational structure, conversely, allows for porous organizational boundaries without enrollment ratified by formal membership.

A network among organisations from a large number of countries is formed when a set of preconditions exist, in terms of values, identities and political projects, and when a convergence develops on the importance of a specific global issue, on the agreement on a common issue frame and on the appropriate strategies to tackle it. Crucial in order to achieve convergence are the procedures according to which the consensus is affirmed and reproduced. In the network formation process the most used method of consensus confirmation is the production of a statute, that is then voted according to different procedures, both formal and informal. Voting procedures include simple majority rule; qualified majority rule; consensus; unanimity; and no objection base, depending on the circumstances. Additional key elements in this process include internal debate, entitlement to speak, and entitlement to vote.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{11}\) In a recent document of European Attac on the ESF process, the point was stressed on the need for the enhancement of the method of consensus finding. The WSF was taken as an example, and a call was made for
The "internal" dynamics of a global network are determined by the strategic decisions of national social and political actors to enter, stay or leave a network. Underpinning these decisions are a number of reasons which can be interpreted according to a model of acquisition of shares of "ownership" in the network, where the investment of political capital and resources by each participant is negotiated with the network coordinator and other key members, in order to obtain political gains both at the international and national level, in ways that may differ substantially across member organisations.

In transnational networks, the principled dimension we unfolded in the previous section on values is combined to a strategic or instrumental dimension, which can be roughly labelled *do ut des* conditionality. While it is undeniable that the normative content is of paramount important in the structuring of transnational networks, it is equally significant to reveal the instrumental side of the network relationships in terms of political drive, leadership, and interest pursuit.

The instrumental reading of the network organisational structure is nowhere more evident than in the mechanism of participation and ownership of the network. Members of the network coalesce on a clear equation of the type *do ut des*, which produces internal contingency and asymmetrical relations. Members are not part of the network until they decide to what extent take part, which is directly dependent on what the member receives back in change of its participation. This results in differing degrees of participation of each member, and thus in asymmetrical roles in the network.

This strategic aspect of the network organisational form should not be exaggerated, for it is moderated by both the discursive process within the network which keeps changing members' interests, and by the original background in reference to the common principles and values. In this regard, members should be simultaneously considered stake-holders and share-holders. They are stake-holders, insofar as they have in common - before entering a network or as a consequence of the internal discursive practice - a number of general principles and values that refer to concrete stakes in the struggle on global politics (the moral side of the network relationship). But they are share-holders, inasmuch as they bargain the degree of their engagement according to the degree of the satisfaction of their specific interest (the strategic side of the network relationship).

In the "internal" dynamics of the relationships between transnational networks and their member organisations, the above issues emerge as key aspects of internal democratic processes, where the deliberative dimension is increasingly important, with the forms and incentives to participation in activities and decision making, alongside the traditional problems of formal democratic organisation.

In the emergence of transnational networks, a number of specificities that set them apart from the widely studied national networks have to be pointed out:

1. At the global level the institutional system is less rigidly structured than within states, and this favours the emergence within global civil society of forms of

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a broader consultation toward the inclusion of those different movements and organisations who are currently not following the process, but nevertheless consider it most important. Broad consultations when defining themes and technical solutions for facilitating strategic inter-linkages and voluntary mergers of self-organised activities were to be found for the improvement of the ESF, in particular of its European Preparatory Assembly (EPA). In addition to openness and inclusiveness, transparency and accountability should also be strengthened, according to the Attac coalition (Attac 2004).
organisation and coordination that are equally flexible and fluid, networks being the most effective model.

2. At the global level a plurality of institutional actors coexists (including different states) and often no single or final authority can be identified for a given issue, creating opportunities for the "vertical coalitions" mentioned above, where civil society networks can play a crucial role. Nothing similar could develop in a national context.

3. Membership of transnational networks is also different in that it often excludes the participation of individuals. A number of costly barriers - including education, knowledge of foreign languages, travel costs, competence on complex global issues - prevent most individuals from taking part in the prolonged actions of the networks, except for the sporadic participation to global events of protest or pressure actions such as "mail bombing" or "net strikes".

4. A further specificity of transnational networks is the frequent lack of single, charismatic leaders. This is the result of three main factors; first, the horizontal structure of networks reduced the emergence of hierarchies and leaders. Second, the focus of transnational networks' work on the "proximity" of social movements means that leaders may be well known to activists, but have little exposure to the wider public. Third, there is a lack of symmetry between the cross border width of a network and the nation-based media system and public opinion that produce the "demand" for movement leaders.

Moving beyond the "internal" dynamics of the relationships between networks and their member organisations, we can identify two sets of relationships that matter for a global network. Networks activities are directed, on the one hand, to the "proximate" world of civil society and to the global justice movements and, on the other hand to the "external" world of global political and economic powers. In the former activities, networks build legitimacy through the involvement of key civil society organisations in different national contexts and present themselves as a legitimate advocate of voiceless and yet general interests, reclaiming a role in the public space. They grow on the identities and resources of civil society and provide global social movements with more focused issue frames, permanent transnational coordination and more effective campaigns, allowing for an evolution of their values, identities and strategies in the process.

Due to complexity of global issues and the difficulty of cross border activism, networks have generally played a crucial role in the growth of global mobilisations, linking major civil society organisations of different countries. They, in turn, have often developed sub-networks at the national and local level diffusing mobilisations on global issues. In such cases we can identify networks with a "central" role in global social movements. In other cases, transnational networks may play a more "peripheral" role, for instance when mass mobilisations are able to directly involve individuals and public opinion, or when transnational networks provide specific, limited support to national organisations in terms of experts' competences, resources, or access to international institutions. In the latter case we may find networks with a "bridging function" between global civil society and the sphere of global politics, as in the case of several UN-related networks among civil society organisations aiming at favouring their participation to UN activities or World Summits. In a few cases, a similar "bridging function" may be carried out in relation to the global economy by networks favouring consultation and dialogue with corporations and economic
decision makers, on issues such as environmental sustainability or corporate social responsibility. Networks with a "bridging function" are clearly peripheral to the dynamics of global social movements and may lose autonomy and legitimation as civil society actors as they move closer to cooperation with global economic or political centres of power.

4.3. Actions

The fluid and flexible nature of transnational networks means that their establishment does not guarantee by itself their permanence in time and the possibility to concentrate on the "outside" world alone. The actions carried out by a network have to be set in three different contexts, following the distinction made above: a) actions whose main meaning and effect concern the "internal" network dynamics, assuring the reproduction of the network; b) actions directed to the "proximate" world of global social movements; c) actions directed to the "external" world of economic and political power and public opinion.

The main activity of transnational networks is the development of global campaigns on global issues. In this context, the specific actions carried out, organised, coordinated or encouraged by transnational networks can develop at several levels, including:

a) truly global actions (that can be either "localised", such as the World Social Fora, or "diffused", such as the global days of action against the war in Iraq of February 15, 2003 and March 20, 2004);

b) transnational or regional actions (such as Continental Social Fora or actions on EU global trade policy in several EU countries);

c) actions in particular countries with a global significance (such as protests in countries whose policy is the target of global campaigns)

d) national/local actions by national/local network members for advancing global goals (such as lobbying national Parliaments on the Kyoto protocol on behalf of a global network for environmental sustainability).

Each type of action may have a differentiated impact on the "internal", "proximate" and "external" constituencies of a global network, and may respond to specific needs, challenges and opportunities emerging in different contexts.

The target of transnational networks' actions may include national, international, or supranational institutions whose decisions have a transnational scope affecting the issue each time at stake. As we have already argued, decisions on specific actions are determined by the combination of "internal", "proximate" and "external" factors. Within the latter, national, international and supranational aspects lead to a multilayered political opportunity structure in which transnational networks have to play (Kolb 2003; Tarrow 2001). While the issues that motivates the mobilisation can be ultimately global (though often mediated by the local dimension), the actual possibility of the take off of the mobilisation is entrenched in a net of political opportunities structures which combines both the national and the transnational domain of political action. In the link between globalization and the
raise of global social movements, there is always an important role played by national conditions (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996).^{12}

A major instrument of action available to transnational networks is the development of a campaign, defined as a “set of strategically linked activities in which members of a diffused principled network (what social movement theorists would call a ‘mobilisation potential’) develop explicit, visible ties and mutually recognised roles in pursuit of a common goal (and generally against a common target). In a campaign, core network actors mobilise others and initiate the task of structural integration and cultural negotiation among the groups in the network” (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 6).

Transnational networks generally concentrate their activity on a particular campaign, that may entail however a great variety of specific actions, carried out either by the network itself, or by its member organisations, or by the wider global justice movements. A tentative classification of types of actions may be based on their intended “target”:

a) "internal" and "proximate" activities within networks and social movements, such as spreading information and raising consciousness among activists;

b) public opinion-oriented actions, such as spreading information, political education and media-based initiatives;

c) institutions-oriented actions, where the target is the economic or political power centre (including private bodies, such as corporations) against which the campaign is developed. They may include protests, violent actions, civil disobedience, advocacy work, lobbying, representation of specific interests, development of alternative proposals, etc.

d) concrete alternative practices based on self-organised activities carried out outside the dominant economic and political processes, such as fair trade, ethical finance, supply of specific services, legal protection, self-help activities.

Behind the activities targeting institutions, there may be three different models of interaction with power: a) acceptance, integration and cooptation in existing power centres; b) dialogue and criticism, aiming at reform; c) rejection and conflict aiming at a radical change. They lead us to the analysis, in the next section, of the strategies and outcomes of networks in the global justice movements.

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^{12} The classical definition of political opportunities structure argues that “When institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available, and state capacity for repression declines, challengers find opportunities to advance their claims. When combined with high levels of perceived costs for inaction, opportunities produce episodes of contentious politics” (Tarrow 1998, 71). To this reading, however, it is necessary to add the discursive content of social movement mobilisation (Koopmans and Statham 1999, 227), here included the role of mass media, in order to grasp properly the dynamics of mobilisation.
5. Strategies and impact

5.1. Strategies

The analysis of concepts and mechanisms presented in this paper leads to identify four main strategies for change, pursued by transnational networks and the global justice movements. While they are logically distinct, the practice of transnational networks has usually combined more than one strategy model at the time, in the interest of effectiveness. Moreover, the different strategies or combination of strategies adopted vary in times, for they seek to adapt to the context, while keeping the original political aim. Still, individual networks and social movements at a particular time can usually be associated to one dominant pattern within the following four models.

a) The protest model rejects present institutions and their policies, and demands radical change in both. Protest has been highly visible and effective in raising attention to global issues, but much less so in changing policies. An example is the Seattle 1999 protest against the WTO trade liberalisation agenda.

b) The pressure model has accepted present institutions and has lobbied for achieving minor changes in arrangements and policies. Lobbying has flourished around supranational institutions and UN activities in particular, but with modest results. An example is the effort to obtain a particular ruling of the WTO conflict resolution body concerning trade in goods whose production affects particular animal species.

c) The alternative policies model has questioned present institutions, demanded change in existing structures and developed policy alternatives. The focus here is on the possibility to develop, advocate and introduce change in current institutions, rules and policies pursued by national governments and international bodies, but the success has again been modest. An example is the demand that WTO rules be amended in order to make AIDS drugs accessible to patients in poor countries.

d) The alternative practices model has emphasised the ability of networks to self organise their cross-border activities outside the mainstream of the state and market systems. Increasing efforts are now directed to alternative practices within civil society, at the local level, but with strong global links. An example is the diffusion of fair trade between producers of the South and consumers of the North.

The first three models entail a "vertical" relation between social movements and politics; they are defined by transnational networks' attitude towards global political power. The change that is looked for is generalised, as it concerns all those sharing a given problem; the extent of change clearly differs in the three models. Change is expected to result from an evolution in the exercise of political power, from different policies and/or from different people deciding on them. The fourth model, conversely, is a "horizontal" perspective that tries to achieve localised change, for specific individuals and communities. The instruments for change are the direct activities and experiences of civil society; there is less "division of labour" between civil society and politics, as this strategy aims at the empowerment of civil society. Once successful, localised change can be replicated elsewhere if the new local conditions make it possible.
Each of the strategies pursued by transnational networks and movements will now be discussed in some detail, exploring the vision and the relationship to political and economic power.

*The protest model.* Resisting the decisions by global powers (often of dubious legitimacy) in the name of higher values or broader social interests is a major point of departure of social mobilization and political change. In the global justice movements of the last two decades, such politics of resistance has been effective thanks to an intense sequence of major protests that had a strong media-oriented, globally visible content, and dramatic cases of police repression. While highly successful in terms of mass mobilisations and impact on public opinion, the politics of resistance has been unable to achieve significant results on the international issues it challenged.

*The pressure model.* At the opposite of resistance there is the lobbying model. Networks and organisations may try to influence the decisions of global powers by a systematic work of documentation, contact with national decision-makers, and presence at international conferences. This work has led important results in recent years, including treaties banning land mines, creating the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto protocol on the reduction of carbon emissions, and many other accords on environmental issues. This path of change of the global order relies on small improvements from within the existing institutions, and it is possible only when there is a shared horizon of political action with existing supranational powers. It offers the opportunity to effectively implement necessary changes in global rules and issues, if only minor and partial ones. The risk is to keep civil society subordinate to the decisions of governments and supranational powers, removing the resources of protest and conflict. Recent cases of global decision making suggest that the space for a strategy of this kind are increasingly limited.

*The alternative policies model.* The third path of change is the capacity of global movements to produce alternative policies, autonomous from the actions of governments and traditional politics. Examples include the campaign for a Tobin Tax, and the rapid growth of Attac as a global movement demanding its introduction; the mobilisation around the Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel the debt of Southern countries; the campaigns to reform the IMF and the World Bank; the request for access to drugs by poorer countries, in particular those for the AIDS epidemic, and the failure of the WTO conference in Cancun in autumn 2003 as key governments of countries of the South stood firm on negotiating

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13 The demonstrations in Seattle in November-December 1999 have shown the importance of the politics of resistance of global movements, a strategy which has culminated in the protests against the G8 summit in Genoa in July 2001 and the EU Council in Barcelona in March 2002. In between we had had dozens of large scale international demonstrations against the summits of the World Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in Washington in April 2000, Prague in September 2000, Washington again in April 2001; against the European Council meetings at Nice in December 2000 and at Gothenburg in June 2000; against the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April 2001; against the WTO meeting in Qatar in November 2001 when major protests were held in more than 50 cities all over the world. After 2002, the protest nature of major global mobilisations on economic issues has increasingly been combined with other strategies, in particular the alternative policies model.

14 Measured not only by the growth from the 60,000 demonstrators at Seattle, to the 300,000 at Genoa and Barcelona. After Seattle, the next WTO summit was organised in Qatar, the location most protected from the requests of democratisation and changes in policies coming from global civil society. After Genoa, the G8 summits of the past can no longer be repeated in the same way, and the 2002 meeting his hidden in the Canadian mountains.
positions that echoed policy proposals of transnational networks. In all these cases networks have played a key role in the development of alternatives and in the campaigns to advance them, both within global movements and in the conflict with global powers. The search for alternatives has increasingly characterised the action of global movements since 2002, with global meetings such as the World Social Fora and the Assemblies of the People's United Nations in Perugia.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{The alternative practices model.} Disappointment with the modest results obtained by protest and pressure strategies, and diffidence with the closeness to the political system required by the search for alternative policies have led to growing efforts in global social movements to develop alternative practices, outside the mainstream of economic and political relations. Fair trade networks, ethical finance organisations, decentralised cooperation projects linking cities in the North and the South, all sorts of twinning initiatives between local communities are examples of networks and activism where the advocacy function is replaced by direct, concrete actions that address specific problems. Providing a practical solution to a particular case, of an exemplary value for the larger, global problems, is valued more in this approach, than demanding answers to global powers that are deemed to be neither accountable nor effective. The type of networks that have developed with such a perspective is radically different from the advocacy-based ones, and also their position and role within global social movements tends to be less central to the overall mobilisations, and more focused on specific subsets of global activism.

The differences in the nature and locus of the strategies pursued by transnational networks and social movements in addressing global issues reflect the variety of actors within social movements, their visions and attitudes, as well as the specific opportunities that they try to seize. Such differences are not necessarily a factor of weakness. Successful change in global issues requires a combination of capacity of resistance, radical visions, alternative practices, policy proposals, and instruments that introduce specific reforms. The question, then, becomes assessing the impact that global activism has on global powers.

5.2. Assessing the impact of transnational networks

The measurement of transnational networks effectiveness, as much as all other kind of social movements, is a particularly difficult task (Gamson 1975; Jenkins and Klandermans 1995). As argued above, the impact of transnational networks has to be assessed in all three relevant context, the "internal", the "proximate" and the "external" ones.

On the two former aspects, the number of organisations participating to a network, supporting its campaigns, and the participation of individuals to its initiatives are direct indicators of the network's relevance, impact and overall influence on broader social movements. Additional measures can be drawn from the information available and the visits to a network's internet website, from the number and type of actions carried out, from the communication flows generated by a network.

\textsuperscript{15} The Assemblies were held in the fall of 1995 on the reform of the UN, in 1997 on a just economy, in 1999 on global civil society, in 2001 on globalization from below, in 2003 on alternatives for the global role for Europe (Lotti, Giandomenico and Lembo 1999).
On the "external" impact, Keck and Sikkink propose to evaluate the transnational networks’ impact according to the stage of influence that they manage to achieve in the following order: a) issue creation and agenda setting; b) influence on discursive positions of states and international organisations; c) influence on institutional procedures; d) influence on policy change in ‘target actors’; e) influence on state behaviour (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

In a similar vein, Sholte holds that in response to the democratic deficits of global governance (i.e., ignorance, institutional failings, and structural inequalities) three objectives can be achieved: awareness raising, institutional change, and structural transformation. In particular, six main types of contribution to democratic governance of the global economy, can be delivered by civil society: public education; public debate; public participation; public transparency of governing authorities; public accountability; redistribution of resources (Scholte 2004, § 2).\(^\text{16}\)

While the type of impact so far discussed mainly concerns civil society actors, public opinion and ultimately policy makers, networks pursuing a strategy where the development of alternative practices is paramount have to be assessed using different criteria. Effectiveness, in this case, has to do with the ability to address directly and "solve" - albeit in a limited, localised way - the specific problem identified. Appropriate measures of such efforts have to be developed on a case by case basis.

5.3. The effects on democracy

A more specific analysis has to address the impact transnational networks and social movements have on democracy, both within civil society and in the global system. Two distinct sets of impact indicators may be developed in this regard, both with an emphasis on democratisation processes, on progressive change, rather than on static pictures at a given time.

Democratisation within global civil society could be assessed considering the following issues:

a) the conception of democracy, the ideologies, value system and vision that may be expressed by transnational networks

b) the formal constitution of networks, with explicit rules on membership, participation and activities, the hierarchy in the decision-making process and the transparency and accountability of the procedures;

c) the encouragement to participation, lowering barriers to entry and activity, the openness to new members and the tendency to link with similarly-minded groups and networks;

\(^\text{16}\) Other significant indicators have then been provided by the Global Accountability Project that “works to ensure that the most powerful global organisations are answerable to the people they affect. It focuses on three main types of organisations that operate at the global level: intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), transnational corporations (TNCs) and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), developing a space for cross-sectorial learning. At the heart of the project is a unique framework which identifies four core dimensions crucial to fostering greater accountability: transparency, participation, complaints and redress, and evaluation” (Kovach, Neligan and Burall 2003).
d) the repertoires of actions envisaged and practiced, favouring participatory, nonviolent, inclusive, continuative forms of action;

e) the balance within a network's member organisations in terms of countries of origin and national income levels;

f) the procedures for representation of the network in other civil society or political bodies;

g) the autonomy from political and economic powers and the ability for self-funding.

The democratic impact transnational networks and movements may have on the global system mainly concerns political institutions and public opinion. The following variables could be considered as relevant to measure the democratisation of the global system:

a) the conception of democracy institutions with global decision making power may express and the formal constitution they have, making them legitimate and accountable to the world community, either through the United Nation system, or to global civil society;

b) increasing information and transparency on the decisions and procedures in global decision making, making access by civil society organisations easier;

c) increasing consultation and participation of weaker political and economic actors (such as poor states, trade unions) and civil society organisations in global decision making processes, making available the necessary resources;

d) increasing participation of weaker political and economic actors (such as poor states, trade unions) and civil society representatives in discussion, deliberation and decision making in global institutions, also as member of delegations of states;

e) increasing social movement mobilisations, raising public opinion awareness, putting pressure, opening conflicts, exercising control and monitoring over global decision makers, when democritisation of the institutions and mechanisms governing global decision making is impossible.

Efforts to assess these aspects of the activities of transnational networks will be developed in the next steps of the research by the Urbino team for the DEMOS project.

17 On the spheres of institutional relationship, in particular, five main mechanisms of transnational networks’ influence can be identified. 1) Brokerage through the connection of different agents having different channels of access to the institution. 2) Certification through the recognition from international institutions in order to attain legitimacy. 3) Modelling, in which forms already in use somewhere else are duplicated. 4) Institutional appropriation in which transnational networks manage to use the institutional resources for their aims. And finally 5) Voice through membership in the national delegations (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; Tarrow 2001; Tilly 2001).

18 Steps towards more democratic decision-making include the practical ways through which the United Nations, international institutions and states could formally recognise the role of civil society on global issues. One possible way is through granting civil society organisations the right to have a voice on global issues, as members, for example, of the delegations of national representatives to UN bodies, regional organisations (such as the EU) and international conferences; some very initial steps in this direction have already been taken in the case of the UN. In the long term, the creation of a second UN assembly, as a space where representatives from civil society can meet and discuss, is very much a preferred option in the discussion on new models of world order.

6.1. Roots and context

The concepts and frames developed in the previous sections for the analysis of transnational networks and global social movements are used in this section to provide a historical overview of their emergence. The origins of transnational social movements and networks of organisations active on international issues lie in the movements that have developed since the 1970s around the themes of peace, human rights, solidarity, development, ecology, and women’s issues. Starting with their own specific issues, they have developed an ability to address problems of a global nature, build information networks, stage actions, find self-organised solutions across national borders, interacting also in original ways with the new sites of supranational power (Cohen and Rai 2000; della Porta, Kriesi and Rucht 1999; Florini 2000; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Lipschutz 1992; O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte and Williams 2000; Waterman 1998).

However, the roots of such cross border activism and its historical antecedents can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. Charnovitz (Charnovitz 1997) has shown that in a previous wave of strong international integration, from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s, the establishment of supranational bodies such as the League of Nations and of scores of inter-governmental organisations was accompanied by equally flourishing international non-governmental organisations and civil society conferences. At several official summits and in the operation of the League of Nations, civil society groups were often able to articulate proposals on a wide range of themes including peace, national liberation, and economic, social, and women’s rights; in some cases they were even involved in official activities, opening the way for the formal recognition of NGOs in the Charter of the United Nations in 1945.

During most of the Cold War years the space for international civil society activities was constrained and shaped by state power and policies. The international mobilisation of civil society mainly took the form of trying to influence government policies on decolonisation, national self-determination, peace, human rights, development, and the environment. The political movements of the 1960s and 1970s challenged the political and economic order at the national and the international levels with a transformative perspective still focused on state power. A major exception was the rise of the women’s movement, which opened the way for new forms of politics, social practices, and culture based on identity (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989).

Within international institutions, NGOs had found since the 1970s a substantial opening in the UN system, in ECOSOC, and other activities; however, this official recognition of civil society work at the international level has led to very modest results in terms of visibility, relevance, and impact on the operation of the international system (Gordenker and Weiss 1995, and the contributions in the same special issue of Third World Quarterly; Lotti and Giandomenico 1996; Otto 1996). A wave of state summits began in the mid-1970s, spurred by far-reaching political change—East-West détente, the completion of decolonisation, and a new attention to human rights—and by economic developments—the end of the Bretton Woods international monetary system, the oil shocks, and the emergence of transnational social movements (Pianta 2001; Pianta 2003; Pianta, Silva and Zola 2004).
of the North-South divide. Existing inter-governmental organisations, starting with the UN, played a renewed and broader role, and other forums were established; the first G5 meeting was held in 1975. As global issues and supranational decision-making power became increasingly important, attention and action by civil society also increased. Moving on from traditional efforts to put pressure on nation-states, attention started to focus on global problems and on the failure of states to address them in events such as summits. Symbolic actions, at first small in scale and poorly organised, were followed by more systematic international work by civil society organisations, the creation of networks and mobilisations challenging international powers.

Different streams of cross-border activism, dating from the 1970s, are relevant here. They include the activities of international NGOs operating in several countries; the growth of parallel summits organised at meetings of international institutions; the emergence of international civil society meetings, and most recently, the appearance of global days of actions organised by the global justice movements.

**International NGOs.** Since the 1970s a few large civil society organisations - such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, WWF, Friends of the Earth, etc. - have established themselves as players on specific transnational issues - human rights, peace, environmental issues, etc. Moving from their base in Northern Europe or in the US, they have built membership and raised funds in dozens of countries and brought the attention of international public opinion to major issues of international concern, with a combination of protest events, lobbying efforts, and a patient work of documentation and information addressed to an event broader public.

**Parallel Summits.** Since the mid-1970, but more evidently from the mid-1980s onward, civil society organisations have started to meet during summits of states and inter-governmental organisations in order to challenge their growing role as locus of decision making on global issues. They have invented in this way the model of *parallel summits*, events that challenge the legitimacy of government summits, confront official delegates, make cross border networking among civil society organisations possible, give visibility to transnational social movements resisting neo-liberal policies and proposing alternatives to global problems.\(^{20}\)

**Global civil society events and global days of action.** Building on the experience of parallel summits, at the end of the 1990s transnational networks and the emerging global justice movements would take their initiatives one step further with the organisation of

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\(^{20}\) Parallel summits are defined here as follows (Pianta 2001; Pianta 2001):

- events organised by national and international civil society groups with international participation, independently of the activities of states and firms;
- events that may result from the autonomous initiative of civil society, or may coincide with, or be related to official summits of governments and international institutions;
- events that address global issues, or the same problems as official summits, with a critical perspective on government and business policies;
- events that use the means of public information and analysis, political mobilisation and protest, and alternative policy proposals; and
- events with or without formal contacts with the official summits (if there is one).
large scale global civil society events and global days of action independently from the agenda of states and international institutions.

6.2. The 1970s and 1980s: the streams of cross border activism

Several streams of activism have monitored and flanked UN meetings on the environment, development, women, and human rights since the 1970s. In 1972 the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm saw the participation of a few hundreds NGOs active both inside and outside the official meeting (Conca 1995). In 1974 the World Food Conference in Rome saw an active presence of NGOs (Van Rooy 1997). In 1975 the First World Conference on Women held in Mexico City launched the UN Decade for Women, and was followed by one in 1980 in Copenhagen and another one 1985 in Nairobi; in all events large NGO forums were held (Chen 1995). Global summits of this type, with the UN system and states allowing some room for civil society voices, were possible because of the urgency of the issues, and because these themes did not challenge the Cold War ideologies of the time.

On the more controversial political and economic issues, civil society had to organise its international activities independently of the operation of states, the UN, and other international institutions. So the peace movement in 1981 started to organise the European Nuclear Disarmament Conventions (Kaldor 2003). Public opinion tribunals were regularly held on peace, human, economic, and social rights since the one on War Crimes in Vietnam organised by Bertrand Russell in 1967 (Fondazione Internazionale Lelio Basso 1998). The first gathering of The Other Economic Summit (TOES) to coincide with a G7 meeting was organised in 1984 by the New Economics Foundations of London, in association with the Right Livelihood Awards, a sort of ‘alternative Nobel Prize’ which has been awarded since 1980 (Ekins 1992). At first small conferences and media events, with a strong alternative development and environmental focus, TOES have been regularly organised in cooperation with different international networks and civil society coalitions of the country hosting the G7 summit. In recent years, alternative meetings to G8 summits have become large scale global civil society events, including protests and alternative conferences, organised by large coalitions of CSOs and global social movements.

These events made it possible for the first time the encounter of large numbers of NGOs and the development of direct relationships to decision makers on global issues - either UN officials or national government representatives. These novelties, according to several accounts, laid the ground for the of transnational activities of civil society networks, facilitated the emergence of a global civil society and led to its growing interaction with the UN on global issues.

An assessment of the 1974 World Food Conference in Rome argues that it has been "for many voluntary organisations, particularly in the North, a springboard into international advocacy work" and that "Rome drew the attention of a whole new set of NGO actors and propelled them onto the international stage. It was the same fledgling network that would bring about more substantial changes 18 years later in Rio" (Van Rooy 1997, 94, 98). In the case of women, it has been argued that "prior to the mid-1980s the world's women had not yet developed a collective identity, a collective sense of injustice, or common forms of organising. 1985 was, in many ways, a watershed year. The third United Nations world conference on women which took place in Nairobi, Kenya, and
consisted of both an intergovernmental conference and a forum of non-governmental organisations, brought together women from across the globe" (Moghadam 2004) leading to the emergence of transnational feminist networks and to the much larger mobilisation in Beijing ten years later.

6.3. The 1990s: the building of transnational networks

The large UN thematic conferences of the early 1990s, designed to chart the agenda for the twenty-first century on global issues were a major turning point for the emergence and participation of global civil society (UNRISD 2003).

The 1992 Rio Conference on the Environment and Development and the parallel summit taking the form of an NGOs' Forum were unprecedented in their size, media resonance, and long-term impact on ideas and policies, and for the emergence of a global civil society involved in building networks, developing joint strategies, and confronting states and international institutions (Conca 1995; Van Rooy 1997).

In 1993 the UN conference on human rights in Vienna saw the participation of thousands of civil society activists, and addressed a key issue, long neglected by states in the Cold War (Gaer 1995; Smith, Pagnucco and Lopez 1998). In 1994 the Cairo conference on population led civil society groups to forge new links on the conditions of women, families, and societies in the North and South.

Finally, 1995 was a crucial year for the emergence of global civil society. The Copenhagen Conference on Social Development and the Beijing conference on Women, both with very large NGO Fora integrated in the official programme, were points of no return for the visibility, relevance, and mobilisation of global civil society.

Several thousand NGOs participated to the events in Copenhagen and Beijing, gaining attention from official delegations, influencing the agenda and the final documents, and—equally important—becoming involved in large-scale civil society networks. The key issue of the Social Development conference was the need to combine economic growth with improvements in social conditions; its policy implications were clearly at odds with the neo-liberal prescriptions to contain social expenditure and public action.

The Conference on Women addressed many aspects of women’s conditions in North and South, including gender roles, family structures, reproductive rights, and social and economic activities; it called for a wide range of actions, from individual self-help to international commitments by states. 21

A large participation by NGOs (8,000 people from 2,400 organisations) marked also the NGO Forum parallel to the UN conference on human settlements held in Istanbul in 1996. In the same year, in Rome the FAO World Food summit was held, with a major involvement of NGOs both in the official activities, in the NGO Forum and in other parallel events. Again in Rome, in 1998, global civil society played a major role at the conference establishing the international Criminal Court (Glasius 2002).

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21 On environmental, social, and women’s issues, see the case studies in (Chen 1995; Cohen and Rai 2000; Florini 2000; Keck and Sikkink 1998; O’Brien, Goetz, Scholte and Williams 2000; Petchesky 2000; Rajagopal 2003; Uvin 1995).
A major global civil society event without an official UN summit was the Hague Appeal for Peace conference of 1999, held during NATO intervention in Kosovo, that gathered 10,000 participants from all over the world and involved several governments. A series of global civil society meetings held independently of UN summits, but with an explicit reference to the need for a more active and democratic UN are the Assemblies of the Peoples of the United Nations organised every other year since 1995 in Perugia, Italy, by a coalition of Italian and international civil society organisations. They have regularly brought together representatives of CSOs from more than 100 different countries to discuss issues such as the reform of the United Nations, economic justice, and a stronger role for global civil society; each event included a 15-mile peace march to Assisi with participation ranging from 50,000 to 200,000 people. The theme of the 1999 Assembly was "Another world is possible" (Lotti, Giandomenico and Lembo 1999; Pianta 1998; Pianta 2001; Pianta 2001).

In many ways, the first half of the 1990s was the heyday of the model of globalization of rights and responsibilities. Freed from the constraints of Cold War, the international community appeared ready to address global issues through a partnership of governments, international institutions and civil society, under the auspices of the United Nations system. A reformulation of rights and responsibilities at the global scale appeared possible in the context of new arrangements for global governance (Commission on Global Governance 1995). Great expectations were generated, and later turned sour as few of the proposals for reform and policy innovations generated in these years found their way through the decisions of national governments and international institutions.

The early 1990s were a period of sudden growth of global civil society. Participation to UN Summits by ever growing numbers of Transnational networks, increasingly also from countries of the South, and the consolidation of global links in the forms of networks, campaigns and transnational activities established global civil society as an emerging reality with a role to play in UN activities. But the rising role of transnational networks was never confined within the horizon of UN Summits alone. The strength of networking and sharing of values, visions and experiences - key ingredients of a perspective of globalization from below - developed rapidly and lead transnational networks to venture into an increasing range of issues and challenges.

Besides participating to UN World Summits, the emerging global civil society started to organise parallel summits to challenge G7-G8 meetings, IMF-World Bank meetings, European Union summits, conferences of North American and Pacific organisations, World Economic Forum meetings in Davos and other inter-state summits (Houtart and Polet 1999; Pettifor 1998; Pianta 2001). Such initiatives started from the need to confront the decisions of global powers on themes - such as debt, international investment rules, trade, development - that increasingly concerned economic issues and the consequences of the dominant model of neo-liberal globalization. Such challenges - often more confrontational than the relationships with UN Summits - helped to broaden the vision and actions of Transnational networks involved in global issues, and to set in motion waves of global social movements.

This became evident to all in Seattle in December 1999, when a broad coalition of (mainly US) transnational networks and trade unions, together with a variety of transnational networks, challenged the WTO summit and the Millenium Round of trade liberalisation talks. Seattle was the culmination of a long process, not a sudden outburst of
anti-globalization sentiment. It captured the attention of the media, the imagination of people, and—at last—the attention of policy-makers because it had both the arguments and the strength to disrupt the official summit. While the failure of the WTO conference was equally due to the divisions between the US, Europe, and countries of the South, in the perception of social activists, public opinion, and trade officials themselves, this was the first time global civil society had a major, direct impact on the conduct and outcome of an official summit.

6.4. 2000-2004: the rise of global justice movements

The example of Seattle led in 2000 to a dramatic proliferation of actions combining in the same way alternative proposals on global problems and street protests against international decision-makers, developing a radical challenge to the project of neo-liberal globalization.

The first major UN event that followed was a rather institutional one, the Millennium forum of NGOs held in New York in May 2000 with 1350 representatives of more than 1000 NGOs that produced not much in terms of social mobilisation, but an important and comprehensive document (NGO Millenium Forum 2000). This helped broaden the vision of transnational networks that had entered the global arena moving from initiatives on individual issues and had previously been reluctant to engage into a comprehensive perspective on world challenges. Themes such as peace, disarmament, globalization, equity, democracy that had not been included in the previous UN summits, nor in the agenda of major global civil society events, were put at the centre of the final document.

In parallel, the UN Millenium Summit of world governments adopted in 2000 the Millenium Declaration, from which the Millenium Development Goals have been developed, a policy agenda that in recent years has shown again converging efforts by UN institutions and Transnational networks (UNDP 2003).

Among the several UN events taking place since 2000, including many follow ups from previous conferences, it is important to point out in particular the following three ones.

The World Conference on racism and xenophobia held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 saw the participation of 8000 people from 3000 Transnational networks to the NGO Forum, whose final documents were presented at the conference. The conference highlighted strong divisions - usually along North-South lines - both among governments and among Transnational networks on issues ranging from the implementation of equal rights to the reparations for the slave trade, to the Israeli-Palestinian question. In some ways, it showed that the well-tested process of UN Summits involving civil society could fail to produce a consensus on highly divisive global issues.

The UN-World Bank conference on Finance for Development in Monterey, Mexico, in 2002 was a rare opportunity to address global economic issues, a theme on which the gulf between the operation of markets and government policies on one side, and civil society alternatives on the other had grown particularly wide. In spite of a long preparatory process and important civil society events organised outside the official conference, no opening was obtained for the demands of Transnational networks on issues ranging from
debt, to development aid, to the proposal of a Tobin Tax on currency transactions. Monterey represented a unique encounter between neo-liberal globalization, driven by global finance, and the attempts at reforms called by a global governance perspective, with the actors of globalization from below on the sidelines. The lack of change in the operation of financial markets showed the inability of the model of neo-liberal globalization to accept a reform, even after the stock market crash of early 2001. A few months later, a major financial crisis hit Argentina, the showcase country of the policies of the "Washington consensus".

Ten years after the Rio conference, the World Summit on sustainable development was held in Johannesburg in August-September 2002, with 8000 participants and a wide range of alternative events and protests. The assessment by the conference of the failure to reach most environmental goals set a decade before, and the scaling down of several objectives represented a major disillusionment on the effectiveness of the UN World Summit process.

In different ways, all three events showed the boundaries that a perspective of globalization of rights and responsibilities could not trespass. The world economy, the environment and race relations could not be effectively addressed. The dominance of neo-liberal globalization and its pro-market policies could not be questioned. The door opened by involving civil society in debating global issues had been closed. Such an outcome was made starker - but not determined - but the arrival in January 2001 of the new US administration of George W. Bush, with its unilateral pursuit of national interests that after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 was turned into a strategy of global preventive war, leading to the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Facing such a rapidly evolving context, transnational networks and global movements stepped up their activism and developed an autonomous agenda for change. Since Seattle, international meetings of transnational networks have multiplied in a variety of forms. Protests and parallel summits have increasingly confronted the gatherings of international institutions. And global civil society meetings, convened by ever growing coalitions of transnational networks and social movements, have proliferated in all continents. These events have taken place on a monthly basis in every part of the world. They have been characterised by mass participation to street demonstrations, ranging from the tens to the hundreds of thousands, attracting very high media attention, as well as growing police repression. Thousands of transnational networks have become active on global issues, have built alliances, have radicalised their views and actions. The time for globalization from below had come, and with it a powerful wave of global social movements.

After Seattle, a number of major protests opened the way to the rise of global justice movements, with shared identities, repertoires of protests, agenda for change. They included, among many others, the Prague protest against the IMF-World Bank meeting in October 2000, the Goteborg protest at the EU summit in May 2001 and the Genoa protest at the G8 summit in July 2001, where hundreds of thousands demonstrators were met by unprecedented police repression. But the main process that has provided space, visibility

22 For a documentation of the rise of global civil society events and global movements see (Amin and Houtart 2002; de Sousa Santos 2003; Pianta 2001; Pianta 2001; Pianta 2002; Pianta 2003; Pianta and Silva 2003; Sen, Anand, Escobar and Waterman 2004; Seoane and Taddei 2001).
and an inclusive organisation to such movements is the World Social Forum. In January-February 2001 the first World Social Forum was held in Porto Alegre, Brasil, followed every year by ever larger events, moved in January 2004 to Mumbai, India, and returned to Porto Alegre in January 2005. Dozens of regional Social Fora were held since then in all continents; the number of participants involved in all these initiatives may be in the order of a few million people. Through intensive discussion and exchange of experiences, such events have helped to build common values and identities, a widely shared critique of neoliberal globalization, while advancing a different hegemonic project and policy alternatives. Global civil society now does not meet anymore at events organised in parallel to official summits, in front of the locked doors of political and economic power. The global justice movements have emerged as a self-organised, autonomous actor on the global scene.

The ability of the global justice movements to assert itself is reflected in the shift in the nature of its actions, from the focus on parallel summits challenging international institutions and governments, to the organisation of global events based on the independent agenda set within global civil society. This shift is evident in the documentation of global events (Pianta, Silva and Zola 2004); since 2002 they split evenly between events independently organised by civil society networks with a global reach, and parallel summits organised in coincidence of official summits of international organisations or governments. While parallel summits have grown since the 1980s, the number of independent global civil society events has long been extremely limited, and its growth dates from the first World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in early 2001 (that started itself as a parallel event to the World Economic Forum of Davos). Focusing on the January 2003-June 2004 period, 43 cases of global events were identified, with a continuing growth over the past years. Latin America concentrates one third of all events, Europe one quarter, Asia and Oceania one fifth, North America 12 per cent and Africa 7 per cent. The large importance of Latin American and Asian meetings is related to the World Social Fora held in Porto Alegre (Brasil) in 2003 and in Mumbai (India) in 2004, with a variety of associated regional events. Social Fora now account for 30 per cent of all global civil society events. Other meetings organised independently from official summits represent 21 per cent of events. The other half is made by a 9 per cent of parallel events to UN conferences, 7 per cent each to IMF, World Bank or WTO meetings and to G8 summits, and 26 per cent of parallel summits dealing with regional conferences (European Union, American, or Asian government meetings) (Pianta, Silva and Zola 2004).

The most important novelty of recent years is the organisation of global days of action with millions of participants to demonstrations and events in hundreds of cities all over the world. They took place, against the US war and occupation of Iraq, on February 15th, 2003, March 20th, 2004 and March 19th, 2005. The first of such dates was identified by the New York Times as the date of birth of global public opinion and civil society as a "second superpower". The values and politics of global justice movements were deeply challenged by the US government policy of unilateral, unrestrained global power engaged in systematic preparations for war. Opposition to war and the search for peaceful forms of conflict resolution - in the Middle East as everywhere - moved at the centre of global activism, and in 2003 and 2004 the first two global days of actions were an unprecedented, enormous success, bringing together people and civil society groups in all continents, with an extremely wide range of cultures, political orientation, class and ethnic backgrounds. The success of such global actions can be associated to their ability to give voice to the
consensus of a large majority of world public opinion, reflected also in public opinion polls. Global justice movements are now able to articulate a vision for global political and economic relations that is alternative to the model of neoliberal globalization and permanent, preventive war led by the US. They are also able to give a global voice to such a vision with unprecedented mass mobilisations, putting pressure for a change of course on national and global decision-makers.

The effects on political processes are starting to become visible in the election of progressive governments in several countries of the South - Argentina, Brasil, India and other countries - and in the increasing realignment of the electorate in both Europe and the US. The outlook is for an increasing ability of the global justice movements to become visible, vocal, articulated, and able to influence the debates on global issues and, in some cases, on national policies too.

7. Conclusions: the roads to global democracy

Global justice movements have emerged with the urge to search for effective solutions to common, global problems, the lack of democracy in the global system being one of them. But on global issues effectiveness has been elusive, due to distance of social mobilisations from power centres and from the mechanisms of decision making, and to the complexity of the challenges. What are then the roads that global activism has travelled in its search for change and global democracy? Three major ones can be identified, as we draw the conclusions of our conceptual investigation of democracy and transnational networks in the global justice movements.

a) Changing global institutions. Global social movements have confronted the institutions in charge of global issues and the policies they carry out. With a variety of strategies and actions they have tried to introduce change and democratisation. Much hope and effort has been directed to the possibility that international institutions will be capable to reform their own rules, procedures, and policies, meeting some requests of global movements, and integrating and co-opting some organisations. The response from global powers has been extremely modest, as demands from social movements have largely been dismissed and ignored. Still, there may be some room, in particular international institutions, to recognise the role played by global movements, to respond to their activities and demands, to integrate some civil society organisations in their decision making. A rethinking of the problems of global governance could give global civil society a greater role in redesigning the institutional tools for addressing global issues. This opportunity may emerge in fields where an institutional architecture at the global level is still emerging (as in the cases of the environment or the International Criminal Court), and where inter-governmental organisations and Transnational networks have long co-operated (UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNEP rely on NGOs to carry out their mission). After a sequence of hopes and disillusionment, the future of such a course remains uncertain.

b) National politics. A recovery of national political processes remains a major way to affect global outcomes. Transnational networks and social movements have striven to reactivate the mechanisms of democracy in national politics; their proposals have influenced the positions of national governments, and in doing so, changed the balance of power in international bodies, as in the case of the WTO failure at the Cancun 2003
conference. This is a ground where national politics can meet civil society anew. Especially in some countries of the South, the opportunities to influence national politics and the policies of progressive governments have increasingly attracted civil society energies. In countries where the political system is more remote from society, as well as in non-democratic countries, there is less hope in such a strategy.

c) **Globally connected local actions.** The model of alternative practices described in the previous section focuses on the local level, with the pursuit of independent solutions to global problems. Local, specific questions can be addressed with the resources and energies of global connections, developing activities outside the reach (or on the fringe) of the market and the state system. This model has developed as a reaction to frustration and disappointment with the two previous roads to global change, and is based on the strength associated to the ability to effectively introduce change, albeit in few, exemplary cases. Its spread is, to some extent, a measure of the failure of the political system to allow democratic change at the global level. There is some danger that a concentration of social movements' energies in this direction may mean "giving up" on the possibility to introduce democratic change in the global system, thus weakening democratic processes of participation and conflict. But a spread of such globally connected local actions may also be a concrete reminder that effective change is indeed possible, with direct initiatives of civil society when the political and economic systems fail.

In many ways, these three roads to global democracy may reinforce each other and revitalise democratic processes also at the local and national levels. They may all contribute to a *globalization from below* in which global social movements spread and co-ordinate, demanding and practising a more democratic order, more equal international relations, and a more just economy and society.
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