

**Arguing with Networks**  
**Anti-Globalization, Nongovernmental Organizations and Global Civil Society**

Chris Hurl, May 2007

Paper presented at 'Revisiting Critical Courses @ Carleton',  
a Symposium in Ottawa, Canada, June 20-22 2007 <sup>1</sup>  
<http://critical-courses.cacim.net/twiki/tiki-index.php>

*How do you argue with a network? The movements organized within them do exert their power, but they do not proceed through oppositions. One of the basic characteristics of the network form is that no two nodes face each other in contradiction; rather, they are always triangulated by a third, and then a fourth, and then by an indefinite number ....*  
--Michael Hardt, 2002

*Introduction*

Michael Hardt (2002) invokes the notion of the network as a way of describing the emerging logic of social movements, movements that no longer proceed by oppositions but rather constantly connect and reconnect in limitless constellation. The 'movement of movements,' the expression of 'many globalizations,' becomes ascendant, marking a shift away from single issue politics, tying together a whole multitude of struggles in 'open space', a horizontal network that cannot be subsumed under the logic of any single group.

By viewing movements as networks, deep-seated divisions and inequalities are apparently flattened out. The celebration of such multiplicity overlooks the mobilization of oppositions. This paper questions the network model as a means of understanding emerging movements by examining how disjunctures are actively produced in movement. In other words, I examine how actors within the antiglobalization movement have argued with networks. Tracing the interconnection of modes of governance and resistance operating on a number of different scales, I will explore how disjunctures are actively mobilized through institutionalized channels and contentious collective action.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of a research paper of the same title prepared in December 2006 for SOCI 5805, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Fall 2006 - Challenging Empires : Open Space and Dissent in Movement.

I will begin by examining the network metaphor and how it has been recently applied in social movement theory. I will then go on to explore Tarrow's criticism of this metaphor in relation to institutions and contentious collective action. While Tarrow's tripartite distinction provides analytical clarity to recent studies in social movements, I argue that he insufficiently views his concepts as a product of historical relations. As such, I aim to examine the emergence of a particular relationship between institutions, networks, and contentious collective action as it has manifested itself in the recent anti-globalization protests from 1995 to 2001.

### *Against Networks*

In examining the changing political context through the 1990s, Hardt and Negri trace the emergence of an extensive logic of regulation and accumulation, tying together a wide array of diffuse mechanisms under a "decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers" (2000, xii). Hence, they mark the shift in governance away from the clearly demarcated institutional boundaries of the nation-state to encompass increasingly flexible and mobile networks of regulation and accumulation. While previous forms of imperialism were established through "places that were continually engaged in and founded on a dialectical play with their outsides," the emerging regime of Empire is no longer characterized by a privileged space of mediation (Hardt & Negri, 2000, 190). Rather, the mechanisms for regulation and accumulation increasingly traverse the 'smooth space' of the world market.

With the dissolution of the transcendent position of the state, Hardt and Negri argue "civil society" no longer serves as an "adequate point of mediation between capital and sovereignty" (2000, 328). Hence, they proclaim the emergence of a new global subject: the 'multitude,' defined as a "social subject whose difference cannot be reduced to sameness, a

difference that remains different” (Hardt & Negri, 2004, 99). As the structural foundations for mediation collapse, emerging struggles become irreducible, constantly intersecting in an expansive constellation of resistance. Recent studies examine emerging struggles as a complex ‘network’ of irreducible singularities rather than a monolithic ‘movement’ (Castells, 1996; Escobar, 2000, Hardt and Negri, 2000, 2004). Often likened to the flat surface of the internet (Klein, 2000), transnational social movement organizations are characterized by “voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, 8). This creates the potential for new forms of association based on the recognition of difference rather than uniformity.

And yet the “smooth space” of Empire articulated by Hardt and Negri can be exaggerated to the point where institutional boundaries are dissolved in an all-encompassing network of accumulation and regulation, a ‘single logic of rule’. The network model privileges connections, nodal points that intersect across an entire web of relationships. However, what this model “gains in fluidity and flexibility,” Dyer-Witthford argues, “it sacrifices in specificity and precision” (Dyer-Witthford, 2002, 7). As the network metaphor largely relies on an extensive notion of space, disjunctures are overlooked and oppositions become complementary. There is no basis for understanding how networks can be argued with. In critically examining the notion of the ‘network’, John Law argues, “we need an understanding of relationality that takes into account the possibility of alterity within the relations that concern us; an alterity, furthermore that should not be reinscribed as yet another form of difference” (2000, 2). In mapping the uneven terrain of mass movements, it is necessary to account for these gaps, exploring how certain relationships become valorized at the expense of others, how oppositions frequently emerge, and how networks become contested.

*Tarrow*

The recent ‘anti-globalization’ movement should be conceptualized as the product of multiscale relationships that crosscut but cannot be reduced to International Nongovernmental Organizations, transnational activist networks, and contentious collective action (Tarrow, 2001). While institutionalized relationships must be distinguished from informal networks *between* activists, contentious collective action should not be limited to institutionalized relationships, nor should it be reduced to a network model. Rather, these relationships should be viewed as distinct moments in multifaceted and often contradictory process.

International nongovernmental organizations function on the fractured terrain between nation-states, supranational organizations, and local and regional community groups. Tarrow argues they are “organized to advance their members’ international goals and provide services to citizens of other states through routine transactions with states, private actors, and international institutions” (2001, 12). The relationship between members, clients, service-providers and state and supranational organizations is uneven and deeply fragmented as these actors have unequal access to resources, information and institutionalized power.

However, the conceptualization of struggle through organizations or networks neglects the contentious nature of social movements (Tarrow, 2001). The network model neglects the extent to which movement has been organized through disjuncture and separation. A spatial analysis of multiplicity through the network metaphor risks reifying the relations expressed by the movement by reducing them to identities, nodal points, while neglecting to take into account how these identities change over time. Insofar as the event opens a space of encounter *between* groups which cannot be fully regulated by any single group, the potential is created for the transgression of established identities.

## *A Genealogy of “Globalism”*

### *Institutions*

In this section, I will examine how multiscale modes of governance have extended beyond the confines of the nation-state, incorporating disparate practices that traverse a wide array of different sites, institutions and actors under the discourse of ‘development’ and problematizing the distinction between the ‘state’ and ‘civil society’. Over the past thirty years, nongovernmental organizations have grown significantly, coming to occupy a central role in the world system, leading to the recomposition of mass movements in ways that enable the concentration of decision-making power under unaccountable transnational networks (Petras, 1999; Tarrow, 2001; Davis, 2004). By virtue of the resources they command, those who coordinate these networks are capable of setting the stage for action.

I will then go on to explore recent attempts to overcome inequalities in movement through the series of explosive protests that swept the world through the late 1990s culminating in the formation of the World Social Forum in 2001. These events attracted a multitude of diverse groups and organizations demanding the constitution of space in a manner that could accommodate many forms of collective action. Pluralism and directly democratic modes of organization became articulated as viable strategies in challenging the hegemony of neoliberal globalization. However, conceptualizing this ‘movement’ as a network overlooks how disjunctures are created through contentious collective action and institutionalized hierarchies, generating considerable gaps in access to decision-making power, resources and information.

In the wake of the Second World War, national liberation movements spread like wildfire across the globe. Spurred by the formation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, anticolonial struggles extended across East Asia. Guerrilla warfare exploded throughout Latin America inspired by Castro’s example. And with his drive to nationalize

the Suez Canal, Nasser threatened the stability of the oil reserves in the Middle East, evoking the spectre of Pan-Arab nationalism. Moreover, a series of uprisings inflamed North Africa provoking bloody conflicts in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. Resistance was not just limited to the former colonies. The westward expansion of the Soviets and the communist leadership of resistance movements in countries like Italy, Greece, France, and Yugoslavia threatened the stability of Western Europe.

These struggles provoked a shift to new forms of governance beyond the sovereign territory demarcated by the nation-state. With the adoption of the Bretton Woods agreement in 1944, supranational institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) came to play a central role in global governance and the regulation of the world market. These institutions granted funding to a wide array of 'nongovernmental' bodies with the stated aims of alleviating poverty and creating the basis for self-sustaining economic growth in the 'developing' countries. Regional economic agreements solidified U.S. hegemony in the world system. In Western Europe, the Marshall Plan established the foundations for post-war reconstruction efforts while at the same time providing a destination for US manufactured goods and capital.

Colonial strategies shifted through this period from formal occupation and domination under apartheid regimes to strategies of accumulation that recognized the right to self-determination. While World Bank funded projects were nominally oriented towards the construction of economic infrastructure, this was only made possible through the incursion of substantial debts by 'developing' countries, creating new relations of dependency (Frank, 1966). This would later provide the basis for Structural Adjustment Programs imposed through the 1980s and 1990s as a means of privatizing state infrastructure, enabling the further intensification of accumulation. In this manner, the United States was able to create a

motor for economic growth through which it would become the ascendant power through the postwar period (Wallerstein, 2006).

As a consequence, regional and transnational mechanisms of intervention proliferated through this period. While the growth and development of International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs) was quite limited prior to the war, by 1947 over 90 organizations were being founded each year, at a rate steadily increasing through the 1960s (Boli & Thomas, 1999, 22). According to the *Yearbook of International Associations*, “transnationally organized citizen’s groups” grew from 1,000 in 1950 to nearly 20,000 in 1999 (Smith and Wiest, 2005). The tremendous growth of these institutions reflected the reorganization of power on a global scale through the diffusion of regulative and administrative power beyond the national borders to incorporate local, regional and supranational institutions and structures. However, this was a highly uneven and often contradictory process shaped by local and regional variations in production, regulation and resistance.

Of course, evaluating the growth and development of INGOs is problematic to the extent that this mode of organization has been variable over time. As Tarrow argues, “although the term has gained great currency in recent debates, it is surprising how little consensus there seems to be on the definition and operationalization of INGOs” (2001, 12). The constitution of the ‘nongovernmental’ reflects the long-standing and largely taken for granted opposition of ‘civil society’ to the ‘state’ (Anderson & Rieff, 2000). Emerging in the eighteenth century, the modern conception of ‘civil society’ was predicated on the transcendence of the nation-state “as an abstract entity with its own corporate identity” (Wood, 1995, 239). Through positing the ‘state’ as a universal point of mediation, a space for ‘nongovernmental’ relationships could ostensibly be demarcated, encompassing

everything from the World Wildlife Fund through to the Commission for the Geographical Map of the World and the International Tin Council.

Yet this relationship has increasingly blurred as nongovernmental organizations take on functions previously employed by state. While civil society has traditionally been counterposed to the state, it increasingly “represents a particular network of social relations which does not simply stand in opposition to the coercive, ‘policing’ and ‘administrative’ functions of the state but represents the *relocation* of these functions, or at least some significant part of them” (Wood, 1995, 254). The diffusion of administrative and regulatory techniques across ‘civil society’ has been explored in great depth by Michel Foucault. Advancing an immanent theory of power relationships, Foucault rejects the notion that there can be a “binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations” (1978, 94). Rather, the advent of “biopower” is marked by the “explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations” (140). Foucault traces the development of “*techniques* of power present at every level of the social body”, including institutions such as hospitals, clinics, and prisons which would form the basis of his analysis (141).

The shift from transcendent to immanent modes of governance was exemplified in the *technical* management of “populations” as opposed to their formal *political* subjugation. With the growth of supranational institutions through the post-war period, this relationship was increasingly expressed through the discourse of ‘development’. As Escobar argues, “[d]evelopment fostered a way of conceiving of social life as a technical problem, as a matter of rational decision and management to be entrusted to the group of people – the development of professionals – whose specialized knowledge allegedly qualified them for the task” (Escobar, 1997, 91). Consequently, institutions responsible for governing ‘development’ came to occupy key positions by virtue of their ability to produce technical

knowledge. The growth of development discourse is significant to the extent that it rearticulates biopower on a global scale, justifying supranational intervention in areas of life previously considered to be under the jurisdiction of the nation-state. Through the proliferation of 'nongovernmental' channels of regulation and administration "state power has been simultaneously expanded and depoliticized" (Ferguson, 1994, 263).

The extension of 'development' strategies around the world through the post-war period largely prefigured the hegemonic posturing of 'globalization' through the late 1990s. Critically analyzing 'development' discourse, post-development theorists were among the first to anticipate this shift as the state became integrated as a single moment in an expansive logic of rule, "forming a relay or point of coordination and multiplication of power relations" (Ferguson, 1994, 272). These relations intersected at nodal points interspersed across institutions that function on a range of scales, including nongovernmental organizations, regional trading blocs, and supranational institutions such as the World Trade Organization.

Disjunctures are created between those who traverse transnational networks and those who cannot step outside the boundaries of their neighborhood; between 'lobbyists,' 'service providers,' and clients'; between formal and informal modes of organization; between diverse methods of communication and decision-making. While often portrayed as an emerging globalism, transnational networks embody a specific set of relationships that are never fully integrated with local, regional or national networks. Recent studies examine the "governance of complexity," tracing the rise of administration and regulation across a series of overlapping institutions that never fully connect (Sassen, 1991; Brenner, 1999).

"Globalization is not a homogeneous or homogenizing process," Bob Jessop argues; rather, "it is a contradictory, conflictual, contested and complex resultant of multi-scalar, multi-temporal, multi-centric processes that develops unevenly in time and space" (Jessop, 2000, 356).

‘Global civil society’ is constituted through the interstices of national and supranational modes of governance, reflecting the disjunctures that continue to fragment these institutions. By flattening these institutional networks onto a single plain, they do not see how the function of mediation continues to be necessary, albeit functioning in an increasingly flexible manner. Hence, in spite of the predictions of Hardt and Negri, “global civil society” has become widely articulated in contesting neoliberal globalization. “Civil society politics,” Barlow and Clarke declare, “are the politics of the twenty-first century” (2001, 5).

However, the all-encompassing concept of ‘global civil society’ does not capture the uneven and deeply fragmented landscape of institutions, avenues, and movements that run through it. As Tarrow argues, “these predictions go too directly from globalization or some other such process to transnational social movements and thence to global civil society” (2001, 2). The articulation of “global civil society” in fact lumps together institutions, actors and events functioning on a number of levels.

### *Networks*

As Northern states continue to command a disproportionate degree of power in global institutions, INGOs orient their lobbying efforts accordingly<sup>2</sup>. While INGOs remain heavily dependent on funding from the North (Smith & Wiest, 2005), their ‘client’ base is often located in the South. Able to traverse transnational networks and access extensive resources, INGOs are consequently able to set the stage for local actions.

---

<sup>2</sup> For instance, in his case study of resistance to the Narmada Dam project in India, Jai Sen explores how “by using the powerful but non-democratic World Bank system, the campaigns ultimately helped to reinforce conventional North-South state geopolitics” (Sen, 1999, 338). By lobbying Northern governments to withdraw funding for large scale development projects these organizations reaffirmed a relationship of dependency which inadvertently disempowered local communities in the South.

Through the 1980s and 1990s transnational activist networks coalesced in resistance to development projects funded by the World Bank (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). These networks tied together a wide array of INGOs under broad coalitions oriented towards specific issues, enabling the coordination of action and resources across borders. For instance, the 50 Years is Enough network was established in 1994, bringing together over 200 groups and organizations seeking to restructure the IMF and World Bank. The 50 Years is Enough network tied together a series of large scale transnational organizations and coalitions, including the International Rivers Network, Development Group for Alternative Policies, Friends of the Earth, Environmental Defense Fund, Global Exchange, and Oxfam America. Through these networks, the basis for large scale transnational collective action developed.

Through the late 1990s, these transnational networks came together for campaigns that utilized contentious forms of collective action. These transnational actions concentrated resources from a wide array of different groups in a single space and time enabling struggles often restricted to parochial forms of representation to access a global platform based on a shared resistance to neoliberal globalization. Given the sheer scale of these events, no single group could determine the structure of collective action. Rather, these groups adopted an ethic of ‘open space’ as a way of respecting the various actions undertaken in a common location.

### *Contentious Collective Action*

#### *Open Space*

Drawing on Tarrow’s distinction between three levels of organization in mass movement, I distinguish between three forms of ‘open space’. First, ‘open space’ can be defined as the space for collective action that becomes possible through the resources provided by transnational networks and institutions. Second, ‘open space’ can be defined as

the formation of lateral networks within the event. Third, 'open space' can be defined as contentious collective action, actively 'opening space' by transgressing the identities constructed in network. In order to understand the dynamics of 'open space' as a strategy, it is necessary to examine the relationship between these three scales of action. I will briefly explore this relationship by drawing on examples from the recent wave of protests.

While the wave of 'anti-globalization' protests sweeping through the late 1990s have often been characterized as a spontaneous expression of resistance, they were only made possible through the channeling of considerable time and resources by INGOs that were increasingly coordinated through transnational activist networks. A key example is the infamous 'Battle of Seattle,' which served as the archetypal model for later anti-globalization protests. In fact, INGOs and trade unions, based nationally out of the 'beltway,' Washington, DC, had been discussing organizing large scale protests for this unprecedented meeting many months beforehand. Many groups were also organizing heavily for what was anticipated to be a monumental event. Ralph Nader's organization, Public Citizen, set up a fully staffed office in Seattle for the expressed purpose of organizing action. The office served as the central hub for organizing and coordinating the different groups involved.

The infrastructure of 'open space' was established through the support of transnational networks and institutions in relation to local institutions and networks. For instance, the King County Labour Council, one of the more progressive labour councils in the country at that time, put a great deal of pressure on the national leadership of the AFL-CIO to support action on the day. While the national leadership of the AFL-CIO remained wary of organizing protests against an administration that they largely supported, they eventually decided to go ahead with the plans, granting King County Labour Council extensive resources as 28 organizers mobilized nearly 30,000 rank-and-file workers across the Pacific Northwest (Armond, 2001).

The organization of such large scale events demands the diffusion of decision-making power across a space that cannot be dominated by any single group. Hence, opportunities emerge for experimentation with a variety of organizational forms<sup>3</sup>. Through a “rich and growing panoply of organizational instruments” (Graeber, 2002), activists seek to constitute a basis for civility in which the divergent aims of various groups and individuals can be respected. Lateral decision-making structures such as “spokescouncils, affinity groups, facilitation tools, break-outs, fishbowls, blocking concerns, vibe-watchers and so on” create “forms of democratic process that allow initiative to rise from below and attain maximum effective solidarity, without stifling dissenting voices, creating leadership positions or compelling anyone to do anything which they have not freely agreed to do” (Graeber, 2002). The diffusion of these lateral networks across the event extends decision-making structures beyond the closed institutional framework of INGOs and their coalitions.

Opposing INGOs to lateral organizational structures is misleading insofar as these institutions play a constitutive role in developing “open space,” enabling the proliferation of decision-making beyond their institutionalized structure. For instance, the Direct Action Network (DAN) which served as a model for lateral modes of organization based on spokescouncils and affinity groups in future protests was made possible through resources provided by Global Exchange, the Rainforest Action Network, and the Ruckus Society<sup>4</sup>. As DAN activist, Nadine Bloch argues, these organizations focused on “providing support for a

---

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that there are not other forms of action that have had a significant impact. For instance, the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico presents a model for integrating movements, transnational networks in INGOs in a very different way. However, the megaprotests and other large scale events organized through transnational, regional, and local networks have been the most visible and widely emulated mode of action. Following Tarrow (1994), it could be argued these large scale actions were “modular,” providing a model to be emulated in other contexts. It is in this manner that these actions have been able to traverse time, albeit in a fragmentary fashion, like a reel of film. Movement is constituted through the rapid repetition of synchronic frames of action.

<sup>4</sup> Moreover, these lateral modes of organization continued to be supported by INGOs in future actions. Following the protests in Seattle, the 50 Years is Enough network helped to sponsor a series of meetings with activists in hopes of carrying on the momentum in protesting the World Bank meetings in Washington DC on April 16, 2000. Drawing on a lateral ‘spokescouncil’ mode of organization, these meetings would eventually culminate in the formation of a broad coalition, the Mobilization for Global Justice (Mob4glob). While Mob4glob made a formal commitment to nonviolence, the coalition respected the right of other groups to decide on their own tactics.

network rather than building a network” (Bloch, 2000). Hence, Bloch distinguishes between two levels of organization, the network and those organizations providing support for the network. While these actions led to the proliferation of lateral forms of organization through the course of the event, the infrastructural foundations for the action remained largely concentrated in the hands of INGOs. This is considered unproblematic to the extent that these organizations do not intervene in the decisions of the network.

As pronounced in a February 2000 bulletin of People’s Global Action, “[t]here is no centre anywhere that could hope to organize and oversee all this mutual thickening of ties. It would be like trying to instruct a forest how to grow”.

Contentious collective action creates the possibility for open space. Again drawing on the archetypal expression of anti-globalization, it is important to take into account how the success of the protests in Seattle were largely contingent on the ability of a significant fraction of protesters within the AFL-CIO march to break away, rejecting the route handed down by their leadership which steered them well away from the direct action going on the downtown core. In fact, the Seattle Police Department had counted on the AFL-CIO leadership to steer the march away from downtown as a means of flushing out the direct action activists. If the identity of the AFL-CIO as an organization had been respected, the direct action tactics would not have been as successful as their numbers would have been much smaller (Armond, 2001). Through the construction of direct and decentralized decision-making and support networks in a space that cannot be monopolized by any single organization the monopolization of decision-making power by INGOs in collective action can be effectively challenged.

### *Negotiating ‘Open Space’*

The relationships between International Nongovernmental Organizations, transnational activist networks, and contentious collective action were constantly

renegotiated on a number of levels through the course of the event. As I have explored elsewhere (Hurl, 2006), the activists in Canada and the United States challenged the hegemony of INGOs in setting the conditions for protest through asserting a respect for a ‘diversity of tactics.’ The ethic of ‘respect’ was advanced, seeking to constitute a space for civility in movement. Advancing a respect for a ‘diversity of tactics,’ Jaggi Singh argues,

...creates a context of solidarity whereby while we have disagreements about what might be effective or appropriate in a given situation, we can disagree about them while maintaining a certain level of solidarity in the face of a very concerted effort by the State and by the police to marginalize political movements (Interview 1).

However, the kind of ‘open space’ articulated within the protest movement was actively contested, and served as a central point of debate. As Jennifer Berkshire argued, “[no] topic divides the global protest movement like the diversity of tactics question” (Berkshire, 2002). Groups espousing a “diversity of tactics” were excluded from the large coalitions responsible for organizing the actions. For instance, in organizing protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas in April 2001, the Anti-Capitalist Convergence (CLAC) and Summit of the Americas Welcoming Committee (CASA) were excluded from the *Table de Convergence*, bringing together a wide array of NGOs and labour unions, because of their support for a “diversity of tactics”. This exclusion reflected the attempt by large nongovernmental organizations to set parameters for action.

While the regulation of protest was attempted through institutionalized relationships, the proliferation of action on the street undermined the constitution of closed space through institutionalized relationships. While the INGOs organized under the *Table de Convergence* refused to formally recognize a ‘diversity of tactics,’ they were compelled to acknowledge actions that they considered illegitimate through the informal segmentation of space. The myriad of groups and organizations involved in organizing large-scale protests worked together to ensure that space would be available for those committed to different kinds of

action. As these actions unfolded, these boundaries were constantly renegotiated on the field with varying degrees of success.

The 'open space' of the event becomes fluid to the extent that it is constituted through contentious collective action. For instance, while activists agreed to the segmentation of space in order to ensure the integrity of different kinds of action during the FTAA protests in April 2001, these borders quickly broke down in the face of state repression. "We can have a diversity of tactics; that's very nice," one protestor argued, "but the police don't" (Interview). Through contentious collective action, the landscape of the event is transformed demanding the adaptation of tactics to a changing context. The articulation of 'open space' through an institutional or network model could not account for these changing relationships.

Inspired by the large scale protests through the late 1990s, the World Social Forum (WSF) has remained the most visible expression of 'open space' as a strategy for global action. The WSF integrates INGOs and transnational activist networks through the concentration of resources in a specific place and time. Scheduled to coincide with the meetings of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the WSF has come together every January, beginning in 2001, to discuss alternatives to the neoliberal project.

This event is made possible through the time and resources dedicated by various INGOs that have developed relationships through transnational activist networks as well as state and supranational bodies. The WSF was initially spearheaded by a number of large organizations including the French Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC) and the Brazilian Worker's Party (PT). The PT controlled the local government in Porto Alegre, where it had become recognized for its innovative use of participatory budgets, and would later take control of the national government with the election of PT presidential candidate Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva in 2002. Drawing on support from larger network of INGOs, Porto Alegre volunteered to host the first WSF

bringing together over 12,000 people from around the world. In 2002, the numbers would swell to over 60,000.

While the organizing committee has been composed of representatives from various INGOs, these groups have ostensibly attempted to create support for a network rather than building a network. The WSF strives for inclusion, attempting to bring struggles together in a bottom-up and anti-reductive fashion. The WSF Charter of Principles adopted in June, 2001 read,

9) The World Social Forum will always be a forum open to pluralism and to the diversity of activities and ways of engaging of the organisations and movements that decide to participate in it, as well as the diversity of genders, ethnicities, cultures, generations and physical capacities, providing they abide by this Charter of Principles. Neither party representations nor military organisations shall participate in the Forum. Government leaders and members of legislatures who accept the commitments of this Charter may be invited to participate in a personal capacity (WSF Charter of Principles).

While the WSF is organized through a series of popular assemblies and workshops; critics point out that the infrastructure remains under the control of the self-appointed WSF organizing committee (Albert, 2003).

In assessing the World Social Forum (WSF), Chico Whitaker argues for the need to distinguish between “space” and “movement”: “[m]ovements and spaces may be seeking, each one performing its roles, the same general objectives. But each one works in a way of its own, aiming at different specific objectives” (Whitaker, 112). While movement is necessarily particular, following a specific path or trajectory, space accommodates the co-presence of multiple identities, it resides beyond particularity. And so the openness of the World Social Forum, its ability to accommodate many divergent movements, provides an important site for dialogue which would be jeopardized if the World Social Forum adopted a clear platform or position, following a specific trajectory. It would necessarily be exclusionary and hence undermine the conditions of its own emergence.

However, 'open space' must be conceived of as a product of 'movement', integrating diverse actors, events, and institutions on a number of scales. The 'open space' of the WSF cannot be understood as a self-contained network; rather, it is a product of the institutionalized relationships, transnational networks and contentious collective action. In other words, the 'open space' of the WSF cannot escape the original sin of the relations in which it is embedded. Rather, than seeking to constitute a space that is separate from these uneven relations, it is necessary to recognize how they intersect in a very specific way through movements that connect and reconnect to other spaces.

### *Conclusion*

In this paper I have explored the prolific expansion of nongovernmental organizations through the postwar period. I have linked this to the development of biopower, regulating populations through the diffusion of mechanisms of regulation and administration beyond the state. International nongovernmental organizations have occupied a central role in this process and yet, at the same time, have been a central actor in challenging the strategies of neoliberal globalization.

I then attempted to locate the 'anti-globalization' movement in a multiscale mode of resistance connecting international nongovernmental organizations, transnational activist networks and contentious collective action. These relationships developed through the wave of protests emerging in the late 1990s, culminating in the World Social Forum in 2001. Through these actions, INGOs have been instrumental in providing the resources necessary for the organization of transnational action. However, the shape that these actions can undermines the closed space of these organizations. As contentious collective action changed the terrain of struggle, I explored how relationships between closed institutional space and lateral networks were constantly renegotiated.

While the World Social Forum has been organized as an attempt to address some of these issues, I argue that its conception of ‘open space’ is limited to the extent that it is separated from its roots in changing and uneven relationships over time. As I have argued in my paper, ‘open space’ must be engaged with on three levels. First, on the level of institutions, it is important to critically examine the uneven relationships constituted by INGOs that privilege certain relationships at the expense of others. Who has access to this space? Who is able to traverse these networks? Second, on the level of lateral networks, what sorts of organizational forms are developed to encourage participation by all those involved in the event? Third, on the level of contentious collective action, how do these relationships engage with and encourage transformative politics? How do they link with existing struggles? ‘Open space’ is constituted through the ceaseless engagement with these questions on a theoretical and practical level.

## Bibliography

- Albert, Michael.  
2003. 'WSF: Where to Now,' online: Z magazine, <<http://www.zmag.org/>>, (date accessed: March 2004).
- Anderson, Kenneth & Rieff, David.  
2005. "'Global Civil Society": A Sceptical View,' In Global Civil Society, Anheier, Glasius & Kaldor, (eds). London: Sage.
- Armond, Paul de.  
2001. 'Netwar in the Emerald City: WTO Protest Strategy and Tactics,' In Networks and Netwars, Arquilla & Ronfeldt (eds.). Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Barlow, Maude & Clarke, Tony.  
2001. Global Showdown. Toronto: Stoddart.
- Berkshire, J.  
2002. 'Converging Against Capitalism,' online: *CounterPunch*, <<http://www.counterpunch.org/berkshire1002.html>> (date accessed: April 2004).
- Brenner, Neil.  
1999. 'Globalisation as Reterritorialisation: The Re-scaling of Urban Governance in the European Union,' In *Urban Studies*, 36(3): 431-451.
- Carroll, William K.  
2001. 'Undoing the End of History: Canada-Centred Reflections on the Challenge of Globalization,' In *Socialist Studies Bulletin*, 63-64: 5-31.
- Castells, Manuel.  
1996. The Rise of the Network Society, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Vol. I. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Davis, James.  
2004. 'This is what Bureaucracy Looks Like: NGOs and Anti-Capitalism,' In Confronting Capitalism, Yuen, Burton-Rose & Katsiaficas (eds). New York: Softskull.
- Dyer-Witheford, Nick.  
2002. 'Global Body, Global Brain / Global Factory, Global War: Revolt of the Value Subjects,' In *The Commoner* (3).
- Escobar, Arturo.  
1997. 'The Making and Unmaking of the Third World Through Development,' In *The Post-Development Reader*. Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree (eds). Pp. 85-93. London: ZED Books.  
2000. 'Notes on Networks and Anti-Globalization Social Movements,' Presented at the 2000 AAA Annual Meeting, San Francisco.
- Ferguson, James.  
1994. The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho. New York: University of Minnesota Press.
- Frank, Andre Gunter.  
1966. 'The Development of Underdevelopment,' In *Monthly Review*, 18(4): 17- 31.
- Graeber, David.  
2002. 'The New Anarchists,' In *New Left Review*, 13.
- Hardt, Michael.  
2002. 'Today's Bandung?', In *New Left Review*, 14, 112-18.
- Hardt, Michael & Negri, Antonio.  
2004. Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire. New York: Penguin Press.

2000. Empire. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hurl, Chris  
2006. 'Anti-Globalization and "Diversity of Tactics",' in *Upping the Anti*, 1: 53- 66.
- Jessop, Bob.  
2000. 'The Crisis of the National Spatio-Temporal Fix and the Tendential Ecological Dominance of Globalizing Capitalism,' In *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24(2): 324-360.
- Keck, Margaret & Sikkink, Kathryn.  
1998. Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Klein, N. (2000). "The Vision Thing," In *The Nation*. online: The Nation, <<http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20000710&s=klein>> (date accessed: April 2004).
- Law, John.  
2000. 'After Networks,' In *Environment and Planning D*, 18(2).
- Petras, James.  
1999. 'NGOs: In the Service of Imperialism,' In *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 29(4): 429-40.
- Sassen, Saskia.  
1991. The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sen, Jai.  
1999. 'A World to Win—But Whose World is it Anyway?,' In Whose World is it Anyway?, John W. Foster and Anita Anaud (eds). Ottawa: United Nations Association in Canada.
- Smith, Jackie & Wiest, Dawn.  
2005. 'The Uneven Geography of Global Civil Society: National and Global Influences on Transnational Association,' In *Social Forces*, 84(2): 621-52.
- Tarrow, Sidney.  
1994. Power in Movement. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.  
2001. 'Transnational Politics: Contention and Institutions in International Politics,' In *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4: 1-20.  
2005. 'The Dualities of Transnational Contention: "Two Activist Solitudes" or a New World Altogether?' In *Mobilization*, 10(1): 53-72.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel.  
2006. 'The Curve of American Power,' In *New Left Review*, 40: 77-94.
- Wood, Ellen Meiksins.  
1995. Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- World Social Forum Organizing Committee.  
2001. 'World Social Forum Charter of Principles,' adopted in São Paulo. online: World Social Forum, <<http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/>> (date accessed: April 2005).