

**LES ACTES DE L'ATELIER**  
**TRANSNATIONALISATION DES SOLIDARITÉS ET**  
**MOUVEMENTS DES FEMMES**

**THE WORKSHOP PAPERS**  
**TRANSNATIONALIZATION OF SOLIDARITIES AND**  
**WOMEN MOVEMENTS**

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## Introduction

Ces actes présentent les résultats de l'atelier "*Transnationalisation des solidarités et mouvements des femmes*" qui s'est tenu à l'Université de Montréal les 28-29 avril 2006.

Le fil conducteur de cet atelier reposait sur trois questions: *Comment conduire correctement des recherches sur les mouvements sociaux transnationaux? Quelle est la place des mouvements de femmes au plan transnational? À quoi ressemble le processus de transnationalisation des solidarités ?* Notre première intuition était qu'il était probablement nécessaire de conduire des recherches collectives, ou au moins, nécessaire d'y réfléchir collectivement; ce que nous avons fait durant ces deux journées.

Les principaux objectifs étaient de partager nos connaissances empiriques sur le processus de transnationalisation en essayant de le faire à travers une réflexion qui serait elle aussi transnationale, d'où la diversité d'origines géographiques et disciplinaires des intervenantes. La finalité de l'atelier était d'identifier de potentiels nouvelles pistes de recherches et/ou des projets de recherches communs.

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These papers result from the Workshop, *Transnationalization of solidarities and women movements*, held at the Université de Montréal on 28-29 April 2006.

The Workshop focussed on the following three questions: *How should research on transnational social movements be conducted? How should the process of transnationalization be characterized? What is the place of women's movements in the context of transnationalization?*

The starting premise of the Workshop was that answers to these questions are to found by thinking collectively about these three questions and then by conducting research collectively.

The main objective of the workshop was to share empirical knowledge about transnational processes. Participants sought to practise transnational thinking about transnational processes, in order to deepen their understandings of events and processes. A final objective was to identify research synergies and potential common research projects.

*Cet atelier est une initiative de Pascale Dufour, professeure adjointe à l'Université de Montréal. Il a bénéficié du soutien financier du Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada (subvention Aides aux ateliers), du Centre de recherche sur les politiques et le développement social, de la Chaire de recherche du Canada en citoyenneté et gouvernance, de l'Institut d'Études européennes de l'Université de Montréal et de l'Université McGill, de l'Université de Montréal et du Département de science politique de l'Université de Montréal.*

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# SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, SOCIAL CHANGE AND TRANSNATIONALIZATION: TOWARDS A FEMINIST AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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## *Introduction*

This paper draws on a doctoral project in anthropology for which the field research is still being conducted at the time of writing. It is a research note contrasting the principal sociological approaches to social movements with those of feminists and anthropologists reflecting on social relations of power and their transformation.

The research project to which this paper is contributing examines social movements, in particular the "transnational" social movements, as *products and producers* of processes of change connected with the broader dynamics of globalization. In particular, I am concerned with movements that, owing to the construction and transformation of complex inter-organizational and interpersonal networks, are acting simultaneously at local, national, regional and global scales. I am examining social movements' strategies to transform the social practices that cause, reinforce or perpetuate social inequalities. The movement I have chosen to study is the World March of Women. Two important reasons led me to this choice. First, is my intimate knowledge of this movement; I have been personally active in it since 1999. Second, it is exceptionally relevant as an object of study, both as an example of a transnational social movement and because of the existence within its ranks of numerous feminist experiments in transforming social practices; in particular, experiments involving the creation and political articulation of grass-roots groups.

The paper begins with a short presentation of the World March of Women to give readers a glimpse of the empirical object that the theories subsequently discussed will serve to illuminate. Following this is a review of the principal proposed conceptualizations of social movements and transnational social movements, *from the standpoint of their utility in understanding movements as products and producers of social change processes*. Subsequent sections contain theoretical and methodological proposals inspired by the critical contributions of feminism and anthropology. I proceed from the hypothesis that to understand some of the dimensions and meanings of the changes reflected and produced by transnational social movements, we have to go back to the conceptualizations of social movements per se, and rework them to better understand why and how social movements construct and enact strategies to effect change. Elements of the anthropological significance of transnational social movements might then be made visible and subjected to analysis and interpretation.

## *The World March of Women: A Brief Presentation*

The World March of Women (WMW) is a “movement of movements,” to paraphrase the anti-globalization movement's description of itself in its World Social Forum articulation. But contrary to the World Social Forum, which insists on its identity as a process that does not deliberate or seek common positions and declarations, the World March of Women is a “more unitary undertaking” which does produce collective statements, common actions, deliberative and democratic processes and thus relations of representation (Conway, forthcoming). Indeed, over the years the March has constructed its political identity through the collective writing of a series of texts.<sup>1</sup> The deliberative processes that led to the writing and strategic uses of these texts are closely interrelated with the organizing processes that resulted in the creation and political/logistical articulation of a number of feminist groups, movements and networks based in different parts of the world. The story of the construction of the WMW, briefly outlined here, is thus the story of a transnationalization process.

The idea for the WMW originated in Québec in 1995, when women were organizing a national women's action against poverty, *La marche du pain et des roses* (Bread and Roses March). The *Fédération des femmes du Québec* (FFQ) coordinated the action, uniting 850 women from every region of Québec in a 10-day walk, from starting points in Montréal and Rivière du Loup, to Québec City, the seat of the provincial government. About 20 international guests participated in the march. As they were preparing the 1995 march, the organizers had the idea of staging a similar action, only at the world level. They took advantage of the presence of international participants to test the idea, and it was well received. A small group of women then proposed the idea to the FFQ in 1996 and the project was eventually adopted by the general meeting in 1997.

As early as 1996 the call had gone out, using all the available interpersonal and inter-organizational networks, to a vast array of feminist groups and networks. In 1998, the first International Meeting was organized and held in Montreal and 145 women from 65 countries and territories on every continent took part. During this meeting the March adopted the two themes that are still at the heart of the March's identity and actions today: the elimination of poverty throughout the world and the elimination of violence against women. The women also adopted a global platform and decided that the actions of the March would begin on March 8 (International Women's Day), 2000, and end on October 17 (International Day for the Eradication of Poverty) in the same year. (Today, these two dates are still the references for March actions at various scales throughout the world). In the same year a coordinating

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<sup>1</sup> These texts include, among others: the 17 world demands, agreed to by the first International Meeting in Montréal in 1998 and used for the world actions in 2000; a Declaration of Values and the Constitution and By-laws, agreed to by the International Meeting in New Delhi in 2003; and the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, collectively written in a process involving the direct participation of more than 200 groups from 33 countries and territories, and adopted by the International Meeting in Kigali in 2004. In 2005, the Charter was the object of a World Relay through 53 countries in every continent, constituting the March's second campaign of global actions. In the most recent International Meeting, held in Lima in July 2006, 51 delegates from 31 countries and territories adopted a formulation of the purpose, objectives and organizational values of the WMW.

committee was formed, composed of women from Québec, to help coordinate the organization and make day-to-day political decisions concerning international mobilization. It worked jointly with an international liaison committee composed of women loosely representing mobilized groups by world region.<sup>2</sup>

On March 8, 2000, the first world actions against poverty and violence against women were launched. Approximately 5500 groups from 159 countries and territories responded to the call and mobilized, including common actions and mobilizing at the global scale<sup>3</sup> and a multitude of local and national actions that took place between March 8 and October 17. During this time, feminist movements in 114 countries set up coordinating bodies and/or national coalitions to draft national platforms, independent from the global platform, with demands adapted to their various situations and struggles. The spirit of the World March of Women has always been to reinforce existing struggles led by grass-roots movements by linking them to a global, unified (negotiated) struggle. Although to be considered part of the WMW they must ideologically adhere to the platforms and texts adopted at the international meetings, the autonomy of national and local groups and movements is nevertheless maintained.

After this first experience of globally coordinated actions, an International Meeting was held and the women decided that the WMW should continue as an ongoing movement. The March had succeeded massively mobilizing women; in many countries the analytical and political articulation of poverty and violence against women fostered alliances and collaboration between feminist groups that had never before worked together. At this point, the March entered into a phase of internal consolidation (Dufour and Giraud 2005) and confirmation of its presence and growing importance in the alternative globalization movement.

The March's stance in relation to the alternative globalization movement in general is exemplified by its participation in the World Social Forum process. The WMW has been a member of the International Council of the World Social Forum since its first meeting in 2000 and is a founding member of the Social Movements Network, which has played an increasingly important role in the Forum's processes. The March has also been consistently present in the European, African and Latin-American regional forums and several local forums. It is noteworthy that the WMW had already begun to build and organize itself *after* the 1994 Zapatista rebellion and *before* the 1999 Seattle protest against the WTO—two historical landmarks of the antiglobalization movement. It was thus on an independent basis that the March channeled the energy and the organizing power of thousands of grass-roots groups to denounce patriarchy and neoliberal globalization on a world scale. Its participation in the alternative globalization movement, as we will discuss in more detail later, should probably be considered as a strategic undertaking, separate from the WMW's initial construction process

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<sup>2</sup> For this purpose, women of the March divided the world into 14 sub-regions.

<sup>3</sup> The world actions included a street protest in Washington, DC (USA) on October 15 and a meeting the next day with the presidents of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund; a street protest of 10,000 women from across the world in New York City on October 17 to support an international delegation of 100 women that was received in the UN to denounce the situation of women in their respective countries and present the 17 world demands. On the same occasion, the women delivered to the UN the 5 million signatures supporting the world demands that had been gathered (in the form of postcards) between March 8 and October 17.

prior to 2000, and more closely related to the consolidation process that began in 2001 according to Dufour and Giraud (2005).

Parallel to this, during the International Meetings of 2001 (Montréal) and 2003 (New Delhi), the March further developed its internal democratic process and structure, with the movement being coordinated by an International Committee composed of representatives from all the world regions<sup>4</sup> and accountable to the International Meeting of delegates from the national coordinating bodies. Starting in 2001, the work team, which had served as the core organizing group for the global mobilizing of 2000, separated from the FFQ, and was independently constituted as the International Secretariat, reporting primarily to the International Committee. After 2001, then, the March launched itself on an increasingly "transnationally democratic" process, a process which continues today. A new stage was reached when the March's International Secretariat, until then located in Montréal with Québécoise workers, closed its doors to enable the construction of a new International Secretariat in Brazil, in the Global South, after their candidacy was approved by the International Meeting in Lima in July 2006.

How does such a movement produce social change? Do the internal organizational practices themselves constitute social, cultural and political innovations and alternatives? In what ways does the WMW contribute to the imagining and constructing of alternative societies? What difference does it make for a grass-roots group to be part of a transnational feminist movement of this type? It is with these questions in mind that I will review some of the main approaches to social movements in order to evaluate their usefulness to the study of social practices and social change.

### *Social Change in Social Movement Theories*

For Buechler (2000), social movements and sociology have been linked since the beginnings of the discipline: first, because both are products of fundamental historical changes in 18<sup>th</sup> century European society, and second, because they both rest on the presupposition that the social world is a social construction demanding transformation (in the first case) and explanation (in the second case). Paradoxically, according to Buechler, before the end of the 1960s social movements did not receive the systematic attention they deserved—probably because up to that time sociologists had been studying them either through the lens of very general theories of social change that marginalized human agency or from the perspective of collective behaviour theories that marginalized the role of social movements in society. During the 1970s and 1980s, social movements were studied from the frameworks of two distinct intellectual currents, known as resource mobilization theory<sup>5</sup> (RMT) and new social movement theory<sup>6</sup> (NSMT), which have very different postures with respect to the study of social change.

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<sup>4</sup> For this purpose, the world was divided up into five major regions: Africa, the Americas, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East/ Arab World.

<sup>5</sup> The main founders of RMT are Mayer Zald and John McCarthy for the "entrepreneurial" version, and Charles Tilly, Doug McAdam and Sidney Tarrow for the "political process" version. These two versions of the theory are notably different, the political process version differentiating itself from the entrepreneurial version with a more structural and historical approach.

In Touraine's work, here representative of NSMT, post-industrial society self-produces through the conflicts opposing different organized social actors; at stake is the control of historicity, attained through mobilizing and controlling the principal cultural and material resources (Touraine 2004). This framework, which typically places strong emphasis on the constitution and transformation of collective identities, is aligned with a general sociology that classifies social movements as agents of social change (Rocher 1992 [1969], Sztompka 1993), and for which change itself is generally posed as being at the origin of movements, to explain their emergence or particular form. In a similar vein, Melucci (1996: 14) frames the question of change in terms of the relation between the actor and the system, a posture reflected in his definition of social movements:

A movement is the mobilization of a collective actor (i) defined by a specific solidarity, (ii) engaged in conflict with an adversary for the appropriation and control of resources valued by both, (iii) whose actions imply a rupture with the limits of compatibility of the system in which action takes place (Melucci 1996: 30).

Even if this definition is problematic in various ways, I find it important because it gives analytical importance to the specific goals pursued by any given movement. This is useful, in my opinion, in terms of theoretically linking the study of social movements, social conflicts and social change. Movements' goals are given analytical visibility through the concepts of *specific solidarity* and *orientation of a movement* (the third element of his definition) – subjects to which I will return later. Both of these concepts refer to the targeted system of social relations, in which the action in question takes place. In other words, social movements should be analyzed in terms of how and why they intend to change the society of which they are members. I think it is methodologically and theoretically unsatisfying to characterize the orientation (or radicalism) of a movement based solely on the movement's discourses, which is basically what Melucci (ibid) and Buechler (1990) have proposed. Orientation in the form of discourse (and assumed intention) cannot alone account for the effects and complexity of what goes on in the mess of social/political battle. This is especially evident with the strategic use of discourse as a weapon, where actors pursuing opposite goals often end up using the same words in their quest for legitimacy. But I do think that the type of change sought by a movement, the discourse and practice it adopts to effect this change, *in addition to their achieved results or impact* should form the crux of the analysis if we are to contribute to the understanding of social power relations, how they are played out and how they change.

Contrastingly, until the 1990s the nature of what constitutes the goals and demands of a movement played very little or no analytical role in RMT. Although there are debates and some alternative formulations within this current of thought, one of the original premises of RMT was that the presence and particular content of grievances has no value in explaining the emergence and growth of movements since the presence of grievances and demands is a characteristic shared by all movements. As for the question of social movement outcomes, it was in general reduced to the positive or negative response of the State to particular demands or campaigns. This attitude towards goals and outcomes radically differs from that of NSMT. One way of

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<sup>6</sup> The authors generally considered as founders of the different strands of this theory are Alain Touraine, Alberto Melucci, Jurgen Habermas, Claus Offe and Ronald Inglehart.



understanding the significance of this contrasting stance toward movements' goals and outcomes, which I think is important for the study of social change, is to examine one of the greatest differences between these two currents of thought that are rooted in very different, if not opposing, traditions:<sup>7</sup> the scientific project itself, or the definition of what must be explained. While NSMT consists mostly of macrosocial theories that seek to understand and explain the major structural shifts in societies by studying their most significant social conflicts and contradictions, RMT is a middle-range body of theory that seems to assume a political environment similar to that of the United States: a liberal society governed by powerful elites (Guirdy et al. 2000). RMT maintains a narrow analytical focus on the instrumental strategies of individuals and organizations and the identification of variables that would explain the emergence, growth and decline of movements, all the while rooted in methodological individualism and rational actor theory (Buechler 2000; Crossley 2002). The conception of change implicit in this model is fundamentally linked to the State's response to demands formulated in terms that are amenable to the reproduction of the specific social, economic and political system implied in its premise. The obvious consequence is that the processes aiming to transform this very system of social relations are rendered invisible.

Unfortunately, NSMT also has important limitations: some elements of Touraine's theory have proved to be rigid and inadequate when it comes to accounting for what has been variously called the multiplicity, intersectionality or cosubstantiality of identities and social power relations—the object of much fruitful theorization by feminists since the end of the 1980s. For example, Touraine insisted for a long time on establishing a hierarchy of conflicts and identifying the central conflict in postindustrial society, thereby disqualifying many important movements, including feminism (for a discussion of Touraine's theory from a feminist point of view, see Kergoat 1992). These theories also failed to accord sufficient analytical importance to the concrete organizational practices of movements, which RMT has done (Alvarez and Escobar 1992), albeit in a narrow and limited way.

In the 1990s, however, came challenges of RMT's narrow focus—particularly from NSMT, symbolic interactionism and those advocating cultural approaches. Some authors then claimed they had synthesized the various approaches, notably in a book by McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996). These authors asserted they had incorporated the contributions of NSMT by including culture as one of three variables (political opportunities, mobilizing structures and cultural framings).<sup>8</sup> In this proposal, the framing theories developed at the end of the 1980s by Snow, Benford and colleagues (Snow et al. 1986, Snow and Benford 1988) came to represent "culture." Some authors rightly stress that this new synthesis was in fact a reformulation of RMT complemented by symbolic interactionism, which hardly represents the contributions of NSMT (Buechler 2000), let alone culture. As we shall see later, the content and analytical status of the

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<sup>7</sup> NSMT is rooted in Marxist and functionalist traditions while RMT combines organizational and economic theories within in a liberal conception of society.

<sup>8</sup> The book claimed to represent a synthesis of both versions of RMT and NSMT: the entrepreneurial version of RMT was represented by the mobilizing structures variable; the political process approach by the political opportunity structure variable; and the NSMT by the framing variable. Furthermore, these three variables were also supposed to account for the micro (framing), meso (mobilizing structures) and macro (political opportunity structure) sociological levels.

concept of culture is an important aspect of the approaches I will propose for the study of social movements as agents of social change.

Another significant point about this book is that it called for a narrowing of the definition of these three variables, in particular the political opportunity structure (which, according to the authors should be defined strictly in relation to the State), to avoid depriving them of their explicative power. In contrast, other scholars, including feminists, have called for a broadening of the scope and concepts of social movement research. Feminists have denounced both the lack of visibility of feminist and women's movements and their practices in social movement research, due to an excessively narrow conception of the political (West and Blumberg 1990), and the failure to include gender as an analytical category (Ferree and Roth 1998; Taylor and Whittier 1998, 1999; Reger and Taylor 2002). As I have already discussed, and shall discuss further, the content and analytical status of the concept of the political is another important element of the approaches I will propose.

By the end of the 1990s, what was perceived as a new cycle of mobilization at a global scale had emerged, and many scholars felt that RMT (including its political process version) needed serious rethinking. Many authors contributed critiques and suggestions: an improved conceptualization of power and resistance (Guirdy et al. 2000); the correction of an Occidental and/or nationalist bias (Buechler 2000; Eschle 2001; Moghadam 2000, 2005; Roseneil 2001); and the outright replacement of methodological individualism and rational actor theory by an improved general theory that more ably conceptualizes structure and agency (Crossley 2002, 2003) and sociohistorical structures (Buechler 2000); and finally, a better account of gender inequalities (Buechler 2000; Desai 2002; Einower et al. 2000; Eschle 2001; Ferree and Roth 1998; Moghadam 1999, 2000, 2005; Naples 2002; Naples and Desai 2002; Staggenborg and Taylor 2005; Taylor 1999; Taylor and Whittier 1998, 1999).

Moreover, the re-examination of social movement theories advocated and developed by Guirdy et al. (2000) to situate the study of social movements in the framework of what they call the local/global nexus helps to show that the current global transformations and the interest they generate should force RMT proponents to question and reformulate their basic premises, and even rework the circumscription of their object of study (Seidman 2000). This does not mean that the considerable quantity of accumulated data and empirical studies fostered by this current of thought is no longer useful. Rather, in my opinion, it means that, taking into account what has been learned, further studies should try to contribute to a broader empirical reach and alternative theorization of social movements, geared to a deeper understanding of social transformations, power, and the dialectical relationship between social structures and human agency.

A broadening of both empirical and analytical categories seems to have taken place, at least to a certain extent, as one can see in the *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* published in 2004 by Snow, Soule and Kriesi. The chapters of this book reflect a diversity of focuses of study, and it is organized in sections that evoke a broader and more inclusive view of social movements, their

contexts, practices and outcomes than that of either RMT or political process approaches.<sup>9</sup> Their definition of social movement reflects their intention to broaden what gets counted and analyzed as a social movement:

collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are part (Snow et al., 2004b: 11).

This definition (and the book's chapter headings) has the merit of giving analytical visibility to a wider range of movements' transformative practices at various levels of social organization and in the face of structures and power relations extending well beyond the State—certainly an appreciable improvement. The book fails, however, to make significant inroads toward a more integrated sociological view of movements that would, at least potentially, situate them in the context of social reorganization processes that could be associated with globalization. Nor is there a theoretical proposal that would enable us to understand the interrelation of movements' micro, meso and macro sociological processes. It should also be noted that solidarity and collective identity, which NSMT considers of macro-sociological significance, have been excluded from the definition proposed by the editors and were categorized as micro-structural or social-psychological dimensions. In my view, such categorization is the result of the persisting influence of methodological individualism in the editors' approach and reveals a weak conceptualization of social power relations.

### *Transnational Social Movements*

The theoretical debates of social movement theories have only partially permeated the emerging field of transnational movement studies, partly because those who have produced research on transnational social movements come from a variety of backgrounds, including international relations scholars who tend to incorporate elements of social movement theories in a piecemeal fashion. According to Khagram et al. (2002), the debate in social science is formulated in terms of transnational relations between various types of non-governmental actors, with advocacy networks, NGOs and transnational social movements occupying centre stage. A body of work produced within the disciplines of sociology and international relations focusing on non-governmental actors and postulating a “global civil society” and a “transnational public sphere” came to be widely recognized as a reference in the study of transnational collective action and/or transnational social movements (for example, Keck and Sikkink 1998a, 1998b; Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002; Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997). One of the important

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<sup>9</sup> Another example of broadening the object of study was proposed by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001), known for their work on the political process version of RMT (see note 5). These authors, keeping a narrow concept of what is to be considered *political*, shifted their focus of study from individual movements to whole episodes of contention, including revolutions, nationalism and democratization, “and the way various actors, from crowds, movements, polity members to governments, are here involved and connected in mutual interaction and struggle” (Karpantschov 2006: 116).

contributions of this body of work is to have shown that non-governmental actors are increasingly important in world politics, with growing influence on the creation of new international norms.

However, the conceptualization of transnational social movements generally offered in international relations literature is not always entirely convincing and raises some issues worth discussing here. For example, for Khagram et al. (2002 intro), transnational social movements are transnational (as opposed to international) because they go beyond nationalist orientations. This is somewhat vague. These authors attempt to better circumscribe their objects of study by identifying four modalities of transnational collective action: NGOs and INGOs, advocacy networks, transnational coalitions and transnational social movements. The last is the most dense and complex, potentially including the three others, as well as having the capacity, in three countries or more, to coordinate and sustain social mobilizations with the goal of making social change. At first glance, their proposed four modalities of transnational collective action identify the elements differentiating transnational social movements from other types of transnational collective action rather successfully. However, the categories are presented as empirical givens rather than analytical constructs and remain under-theorized from the point of view of social movement scholarship. The analytical criteria for the differentiation of the four categories remain unclear and resemble gradations in a scale of complexity, spatial scope, quantity of actors aggregated, degree of coordination, quantity of shared political content and capacity to sustain social mobilization.

One of the problems with this conceptualization (and with other studies on transnational social movements) is that it is strictly limited to the transnational scale, leaving untouched the relation between the notions of transnational social movement and social movement per se, therefore providing no analytical visibility for the relation between scales within social movements and between movements at different scales. Although this is understandable coming from international relations scholars, it is a major weakness given that the few studies that have explored this dimension have shown the continuing importance of national movements and mobilizing to the processes of construction of transnational collective action. (See, for example, Agrikolianski, Filleule and Mayer 2005; della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Lemay 2005; Tarrow 2005). For Olesen,

The missing link between globalization and transnational mobilization is a process of social construction that seeks to link the local, the national and the global. Globalization, in this perspective, is both an objective process involving certain structural transformations and a subjective process intimately related to the way social actors interpret these changes and give them meaning (2005: 49).

Thus, to understand the way movements influence and are influenced by the processes of globalization, it does not suffice to study what goes on in the so-called transnational public sphere. We must also seek to understand the way actors construct and reconfigure spatial scales and how these are interconnected. To that end, Masson (2006) and Conway (forthcoming) have shown how new geographical works on scale, rescaling, and transnationalization of collective action, using a social constructivist approach to space and scale, can fruitfully contribute to feminist and critical thought on contemporary social movements.

Another problem concerns the methodology used by Khagram and colleagues (2002) and Smith and Sikkink (2002) to study the growing importance of transnational collective action and social movements: the data that these authors use is in fact drawn from NGOs (addressing international targets) and INGOs, that, according to their official mission statements, are seeking social change. The reason invoked for this choice is data accessibility (Khagram et al. 2002: 6-7, 9). Certainly, it is a methodological challenge to count the number of existing transnational social movements worldwide and evaluate their increase or decrease over time. Nevertheless, I think there are several reasons for avoiding the methodological strategy chosen by these authors. The implicit hypothesis these authors seem to be making is: since these NGOs and INGOs seeking social change must be connected with social movements, the study of their proliferation and increasing importance should teach us something about transnational social movements. This assumption is problematic, given that the actual content of the NGO category is highly heterogeneous and that the “politics and antipolitics of NGO practices” (to use Fisher’s expression, 1997) are highly complex and very often contradictory. Furthermore, according to some authors, one of the specificities of recent forms of collective action, due to the intensification of globalization processes and the unprecedented degree of institutionalization of social movements, is a high degree of ambivalence towards institutions and the State (Hamel and Maheu 2001; Meyer and Tarrow 1998). The nature of the relationships and power dynamics between more or less institutionalized movements and various parts of the State and development apparatus must be carefully studied in their respective historical contexts; it should not be assumed that all transnational organizations claiming social change as one of their aims can automatically be considered as part of the movements’ “infrastructure for change” (Sikkink and Smith 2002).

Other authors or other works have presented more satisfactory accounts of transnational social movements. For example, Jackie Smith (2004), in her contribution to the *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (*op. cit.*), offers a nuanced and comprehensive account of the dynamics and stakes in play for social movements in the global arena. This piece has the merit of discussing some of the main emerging contradictions with respect to power differentials in the world system and the complex institutional settings in which movements are often enmeshed at these levels. On the theoretical side, her paper does not offer innovation; on the contrary, she evaluates that

global political processes are in many ways a continuation or reiteration of the same kind of contentious dynamics that contributed to the formation of the modern national state . . . [and] transnational movement strategies and processes parallel developments of national social movements, and indeed they may be seen as a continuation of the same processes of contention between popular groups and state authorities (2004: 329).

Smith continues: “We can thus draw from the rich body of theoretical work on national social movements to understand transnational political processes and movements” (*ibid.*). Della Porta and colleagues (2006) would certainly agree, hence the approach they have chosen for the study of alternative globalization movements. They extensively researched two transnational protest actions (the July 2001 G8 protest in Genoa and the November 2002 European Social Forum in Florence) to determine whether a single global social movement is emerging, as opposed to a collection of separate movements (*ibid.*: 18). They do it by investigating the same conceptual

categories they would for a national movement (collective identity, non-conventional action repertoires, organizational networks) using a barely modified definition of social movements:

Conceptually, social movements are mainly informal networks based on common beliefs and solidarity that mobilize on conflicting issues by frequent recurrence of various forms of protest. . . . Accordingly, global social movements are supranational networks of actors that define their causes as global and organize protest campaigns that involve more than one state (ibid.)

For these authors, there is indeed an emerging global movement for global justice, and their research suggests that it presents the typical characteristics of national movements as conceptualized previously. They conclude that the newness of this movement should be apprehended “in terms not so much of the definition of the new class actor of post-industrial society (Touraine 1978) but more of the presence of emerging characteristics in organizational structures, action repertoires, and identity discourses” (ibid.: 233). For them, changes in organizational structure are what account for “the complex interaction between local and supranational activism” (ibid.: 234-5). Although the focus of his book is not the same, Tarrow (2005) seems to share this viewpoint: after describing various processes and mechanisms of transnational protest (internalization, externalization, diffusion and scale shift, amongst others) he concludes that what is distinctly new about contemporary transnational activism can be summed up “in new ‘global’ attitudes, in new forms of organization, and in the shifting campaigns and composite forms of transnational activism” (2005: 209).

With the accumulating research on transnational activism, we now have a growing body of findings regarding: the most common organizational forms; the continuing importance of national movements; the evolution of the repertoire of contention; movement identities; resources; and how local, national and global political opportunities influence each other (della Porta and Tarrow 2005). Despite all this information, research on transnational social movements presents the same problems that were identified in research on social movements in general: researchers' concepts and methods provide little insight into the sociological significance of these movements' characteristics in terms of the multiple and complex dynamics involved in producing social change. Also to be noted is a continuing neglect of women's movements and movements from the Global South. A contribution to the conceptualization of the general significance of social movements for social change would therefore be a useful step in the study of transnational social movements. To this end, I will turn to what I consider are useful anthropological and feminist works.

### ***Feminist and Anthropological Contributions to the Conceptualization of Social Movements as Products and Producers of Social Change***

The study of social movements is still somewhat marginal within anthropology (Gibb 2001; Edelman 2001; Burdick 1995) but it is an expanding and promising research field, as shown by the recent publication of the first book on social movements produced entirely by anthropologists (Nash 2005b) and of an issue of the journal *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, dedicated to the study of movements for alternative globalization (Boulianne 2005). Among the elements

proposed by Escobar in 1992 (cited in Gibb 2001) to explain the relative marginality of social movement studies in anthropology, two seem particularly relevant to the challenges to social movement theories outlined above. The first is a narrow conception of the political caused in part by the literary turn in anthropology and an emphasis on the study of power and domination in terms of textuality (according to Escobar). Added to this, according to Gibb, is the unpopularity of political anthropology, which, from Evans-Prichard to Bailey, would have been constructed on a radical division of the cultural from the political (Gibb 2001: 244). The second factor identified by Escobar is an inadequate conceptualization of practice, which is centred excessively on individual dimensions, and which would have rendered invisible the actors' roles in the production of social life. We will now see how Escobar and others, both anthropologists and feminist scholars, have contributed to conceptualizations that enable us to surmount these difficulties.

The first problem identified by Escobar and Gibb, the separation of the cultural from the political, was resolved within an anthropology of social movements, in conceptualizations proposed in the 1990s by Alvarez, Escobar, and colleagues. One of their central concepts is that of cultural politics (Alvarez et al. 1998). In this conceptualization, culture is seen not as a separate sphere (or variable), but rather as a dimension of all institutions—economic, social and political. Thus, culture is an ensemble of material practices constituting significations, values and subjectivities (Weedon 1995 cited in Alvarez et al. 1998: 3). Culture is political because significations are constitutive of the processes which, implicitly or explicitly, seek to redefine social power. When movements propose alternative conceptions of women, nature, race, economy, democracy and citizenship that destabilize the dominant cultural significations, they are engaging in cultural politics (Alvarez et al. 1998: 7). This concept is complemented by that of political culture, defined as the social construction, specific to each society, of what is considered political (ibid.: 8). This approach to culture and of politics renders visible and recognizes the political nature of a great variety of practices, meeting the conceptual needs identified by many feminist scholars who considered that women's movement practices tended to be made invisible by the dominant social movement theories (Reger and Taylor 2002; Staggenborg and Taylor 2005; West and Blumberg 1990).

The advantage of this approach, rooted in the Latin-American tradition of social movement studies, over that proposed by Snow et al. (2004, op. cit.), is that it also proposes a way to conceptualize the relations between social movement practices and their historical and macro-sociological context. In the 1980s, the Latin-American tradition of social movement studies was mainly inspired by European NSMT and produced very rich accounts of social change that linked an analysis of social, economic and political changes (mainly in terms of democratization processes) with changes in the political culture and practices of social movements (Alvarez 1989, 1990; Canel 1992; Chinchilla 1992; Cardoso 1992; Fals Borda 1992, 1994; Jacquette 1989, 1994; Jelin 1990, 1998; Schneider 1992). Since the early 1990s, however, there has been a growing tendency to integrate elements of RMT (Alvarez and Escobar 1992; Foweraker 1995). This bridging, proposed by Escobar, Alvarez and their colleagues, is not a "synthesis". It advocates the integration of some of the empirical preoccupations of RMT (mainly, attention to resources, mobilization and concrete organizational processes, which tended to be neglected by NSM approaches) *into a framework whose goal is to study the articulation of agency and structure, and identity and strategy* in movements whose struggles concerning signification and material

conditions are viewed as inseparable, i.e., as *cultural* struggles (Escobar 1992: 69). This approach, which I see as an anthropologization of social movement research in a critical framework, allows us to shed light on conceptual and empirical relations between social movements, development and globalization.

For example, in adapting the NSMT framework, Escobar replaces Touraine's concept of social totality by the concept of historical conjuncture.<sup>10</sup> The Latin-American social movements of the 1990s are seen as emerging in response to a particular historical conjuncture—the failure of development—that must not be viewed merely as an economic or political project, but as a global cultural discourse which has had a profound impact on the social fabric of the Third World (Escobar 1992: 63-64). This author has thus conceptualized Latin-American social movements of the 1990s as enacting a re-signification of development and of citizenship.<sup>11</sup>

Still, this is not to say that the emergence of the anti- or alternative globalization movements should be attributed univocally to the negative impacts of neoliberal capitalism or modernity. Despite any criticisms we might have of social movement theories coming out of the U.S., they are convincing in their demonstration that injustice, discontent and even revolt are not in themselves sufficient conditions for the emergence of movements and mobilization (Zald 1992; della Porta and Tarrow 2005). Saying, as do anthropologists like Escobar (op.cit.) and Nash (2005a), that these movements arise as a challenge and response to situations connected with globalization and development must not limit us to a simplistic explanatory framework. The scientific project of these anthropologists, as I conceive it, is related to that of Agrikoliansky et al. (2005) and consists in *examining the complex mediations whereby actors are subjected to and comply with structural constraints, and understanding the means (symbolic, relational, material and institutional) by which they manage to seize upon or create action opportunities and produce/orient (or not) processes of change*. This formulation, which is the one I am proposing, is original in that it combines the question of movements' emergence with that of the results of their historical actions under the overall heading of a more general concern: the study of the transformation of social relations of power (*rappports sociaux*). The idea here is to establish unequal social relations of power (*rappports sociaux*), at the different scales where they are in play, as the matrix on and against which movements are constructed. This way of presenting social movements as an object of study reflects both the traditions of feminist thinking (which has always been nourished by reflexive dialogue between theory and movements' practices) and that of political economy in anthropology (see Labrecque 2001); it also takes into account the central issue upon which sociological research on social movements has been based for the past 30 years (all approaches)—the study of the conditions of emergence of social movements (Klandermans and Staggenborg 2002).

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<sup>10</sup> The term historical conjuncture, in Escobar, refers to complex structural factors (economic, political and cultural) that affect society as a whole. By comparison, the “structural level” of the synthesis proposed by Adam et al. (1996) is the concept of political opportunity structure, used in the narrow sense of the State's attitude towards social movements.

<sup>11</sup> Since then Escobar has built on these conceptualizations, identifying, for example, three distinct re-signification projects pursued by contemporary movements: alternative development, alternative modernities and alternatives *to* modernity. See Escobar and Boulianne (2005).



By addressing the second problem Escobar has identified with respect to the anthropological study of social movements—the conceptualization of practice—I will specify the conceptual approach I intend to use to study change, referring to the expression used in the introduction to this article that describes social movements as both products and producers of processes of change. For Ortner (1996), the issue underlying theories about practice (the two principal proponents of which are Bourdieu and Giddens) is to discover how power relations and inequalities get reproduced and how they can be transformed through practice (the formulation I propose above is a variation of this, applied to social movements). Again, according to Ortner (ibid.), emphasis, however, has mostly been placed—by both Bourdieu and Giddens—on social reproduction, leaving the question of transformation relatively under-theorized.

We must turn to feminist thinking to find the elements required for this undertaking. For example, R.W. Connell gives a definition of practice that shows structures in the process of being constituted—as they are constituted and reconstituted through social practices—but without situating these practices in the overly rigid context of social reproduction (as would Bourdieu) or of the structure's internal logic (as would Giddens). Rather, he suggests that practices

. . . are always a response to a *situation*. The practice is the transformation of said situation in a specific direction. Describing the structure consists in specifying that which in a situation serves to limit the scope of the practice. Since the consequence of the practice is a transformed situation that is the subject of a new practice, the "structure" determines the manner in which the practice, in time, comes to limit the practice (1987: 95). [*Translation of a French translation*]

Following this, Connell defines the concept of structure by referring to the idea of constraint and limitations on freedom, combined with the idea that a structure may also result in a capacity to act (in the direction traced by the structure) that is superior to that of an individual existing in isolation. Social structure expresses the idea of constraint with respect to a specific form of social organization; constraints are exercised on social practices through the interaction of powers and a set of social institutions (ibid.: 92) and may in return be changed by the social actors. For Connell, then, gender is a social structure in the full sense of the term.

Still, in my view, this conceptualization by itself is insufficient to account for the matrix of power relationships and political manoeuvrings in which practices, especially those contesting social inequalities, come into play at a given moment in time. It is for this reason that I refer to the concept of *rapport social* (above, I suggest the English equivalent "social relations of power") as proposed by Danièle Kergoat:

The *rapport social* may be treated as a *tension* that cuts across society; this tension gradually crystallizes into *issues* with which human beings are permanently confronted, whether they are in the process of producing society, reproducing it or inventing new ways of thinking and acting. These *issues* are what determine social groups. The groups are not givens; they are created in response to issues generated by the dynamics of *rappports sociaux*. Finally, there is a multiplicity of *rappports sociaux* and none of them determines entirely the field it structures (Kergoat 2001: 87). [*Translation*]

According to Kergoat, the issue emerging from social relations of power based on sex (also called gender relations) is the sexual division of labour.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it could be said that the sexual division of labour can be conceptualized both as a "practice which, in time, limits practice," in other words a structure (Connell's concept), and as an issue of social relations of power based on sex (*rappports sociaux de sexe*), constituting social groups according to the male/female sexual division (Kergoat's concept). I believe that together, these two conceptualizations enable us, to paraphrase Ortner (1996), to image a conceptualization model for practice with agents or actors (individual and collective) possessing intentionality but whose agency is embedded within broader cultural and social systems that are not a direct result of the intentions of the actors in question. Therefore, in response to a situation deemed to be unacceptable, social movements adopt strategies that can be in themselves alternative practices (logic of foreshadowing) and historical actions designed to provoke the adoption of new social practices, thereby contributing, in time, to the institution of new social structures. The movements discussed here are therefore those whose action directly or indirectly addresses social relations of power (*rappports sociaux*) and their related core issues. It is the dialectical logic of this conception of the relation between social structures and actors' agency that allows us to cast social movements as products and producers of processes of change, including changes associated with globalization.

### *Thoughts on Knowledge, Goals, and Practices*

Various reasons, beyond the ones already mentioned in the first part of this paper, could be invoked to explain what I see as the need for closer scrutiny of movements' goals, their concrete practices and strategies for social change, and the impacts, both of their internal organizing practices and their more public actions. We need to do this, not merely to determine the existence of a collective identity, one of the criteria, according to della Porta and her colleagues (2006), for determining if a collective action corresponds to their definition of a social movement. We must also consider them as examples of movements' practices of knowledge production—about themselves and about the world—knowledge that is then used to construct strategies to effect change.

What does it mean to ask, as do della Porta et al. (2006), if there is one global movement as opposed to separate movements, when researchers are concentrating mainly on what they consider to be the definition of social movement, and while the groups themselves, as collective actors, are working hard to define themselves and produce knowledge with a view to establishing their boundaries, however porous and flexible these may have to be for mobilization and recruiting purposes? For example, in its 2006 International Meeting held in Peru, the WMW adopted a definition of its purpose, objectives and organizational values. In the same year, women of the WMW are conducting a worldwide effort to update the lists of mobilized groups and identify which groups play an active role in the organizing process and

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<sup>12</sup> "This assertion requires clarification: social relationships based on sex are embodied in a social materiality through the categories, forms and periodization of social practices. The sexual division of labour is the empirical support enabling the mediation between social relations of power (abstract) and social practices (concrete) . . . The sexual division of labour is at the heart of the power men exercise over women." [*Translation*] (Hirata and Kergoat 1998: 95).

which groups are sympathizers who want to receive information and may participate in actions, protests and campaigns. Should not researchers be creating forms of hermeneutical dialogue between the movement practices of knowledge construction and boundary establishment and their own analytical categories?

The most important reason for this posture is connected with feminist epistemology and consists of taking seriously the knowledge produced by the social actors we study. Both social science researchers and social actors participate in the construction of society; both participate in the construction of knowledge, and this dialectical process, fraught with power relations, must be acknowledged and analyzed as a constituent element of the dynamics under study. Feminist thought has been constructed in close intersubjectivity between intellectuals and activists (many of them members of both categories); even—and perhaps even more so—when this meant debate or conflict. The analysis and critical evaluation of the impacts and contradictions of feminist transformative strategies has been used with great success for decades in the construction of knowledge about society in general and the functioning of power relations in particular. Today, social movements seem to be using the concepts and theories developed by social scientists even more than ever (see Cunningham 1999). In return, this demands of scientists studying social movements, that they become deeply involved in a complex hermeneutical process.

From this perspective, it would seem unjustified to construct theories about social movements that deliberately neglect the actors' subjectivity, grievances, understanding of the world, and their own explanation for the emergence of their movements.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, activists who have high ideals about the way power relations should be transformed do not always walk their talk. There are inherent contradictions in wanting to be and act differently, while for the most part inescapably remaining a product of the social order one is fighting. Therefore, while we should take seriously what activists and movements publicly do and say about themselves (repertoires of action and discourses), we should also look at their practices (both “officially deliberate” – which in movement jargon is often called methodology—and the practices on which no particular discourse is elaborated) and seek to identify and understand the contradictions. This has everything to do with *political culture* and with expanding our definition of what is political, as Alvarez and Escobar (1998), West and Blumberg (1990), Reger and Taylor (2002), and many more feminists have exhorted us to do.

RMT has neglected both these dimensions, concentrating solely in the instrumental ways discontent is supposed to be turned into public intervention. NSM theorists have been at the other extreme, concentrating on what *they* thought new movements and subjectivities revealed about the transformation of central conflicts in post-industrial society. Della Porta et al. suggest that both sides should go back to the drawing board: “The movement on globalization challenges researchers to reopen the academic debate on the structural nature of the conflicts in a society that can no longer be simply defined as post-industrial” (2006: 243-244). I propose to go a step further and to incorporate in social movement studies what feminism, social work and development studies have extensively done: analyze the *way* actors (movements) intervene to

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<sup>13</sup> In the perspective I propose here, the concept of strategic framing of movement discourse (mentioned above) is considered useful, but cannot account in itself for the entire meaning creation process.

bring about change and the *results* of these interventions, to learn about social structures of power and how they might, or might not, change.

Approaching this subject in the more limited context of exploratory reflections on a specific movement, I will take as a starting point some very interesting remarks that Dufour and Giraud (2005) have made about the World March of Women. According to these authors, the concept of political opportunity structure, one of the most widely used concepts explaining the emergence of collective action, which one might expect could explain transnational collective action, is inadequate to explain the emergence and continuation of the WMW. According to Dufour and Giraud, the WMW did not originally react to a particular decision-making process affecting women or window of opportunity created by the UN or the IMF. The concept of political opportunity structure, therefore, does not explain the emergence of the WMW before the year 2000. The “boomerang effect”, another important concept widely used to explain transnational or international collective action (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith 2004), refers to a situation where a national movement seeks international attention or mobilization to pressure a national government otherwise unresponsive to their demands. Again, according to Dufour and Giraud (*ibid.*), this process cannot explain the continuation and the consolidation of the WMW, given the weakness of governmental and institutional responses to the demands of the world actions in 2000. Consequently, these authors suggest that we should not consider the transnationalization of struggles as an instrument or as the result of some external phenomenon, but rather as a process of solidarity building which exists by and for itself. I agree with these authors about the insufficiencies of the concepts of political opportunity and boomerang effect, but I would not say that the process of solidarity building exists by and for itself. I will unfold my argument in two different ways.

Firstly, I suggest that the instrumental strategies of the actors be investigated, but beyond the narrow concepts of conventional social movement studies. Following the global actions of 2000, WMW activists surely had good reasons when they concluded that the difficult and costly process of transnational organization and action should be maintained and developed further. In my opinion, the logic motivating the continued construction of the WMW after 2000 was clearly expressed in discussions of the WMW International Committee during strategic planning sessions that I had the privilege of attending as an activist and ethnographer. This logic, as I understand it, is twofold. First, in a context where the renewed strength of some strands of conservatism exists in a potent mix with neoliberalism (both highly antidemocratic) in the global—and, in many cases, national—political arenas, the strategy of the WMW is to continue building its movement and alliances, its bargaining power, and the legitimacy of its demands, at all scales simultaneously. In other words, keep fighting. Second, in a context where other alternative globalization movements are doing the same thing, the WMW must keep up the pressure on allied movements to make sure that the liberation of women is an integral part of the alternatives being constructed by all those attempting to create those alternatives. To that end, it is necessary to build a worldwide, strong, autonomous and grass-roots feminist movement.

The movements themselves, even though they try to evaluate as systematically as possible the results of their strategies and impacts of their actions, are limited in their capacity to do so. This is due not only to lack of resources (although this is part of the problem), but also to the time it

takes for the impacts to become tangible. For example, on March 31, 2006, the International Committee met with the national coordinating body of the WMW in Québec to share their evaluations of the concrete impacts of the WMW on local struggles since 2000. Most of these impacts have only become evident in the course of several years of continued struggle and organizing. Thus, there are indeed instrumental strategies directed at achieving goals in the WMW, but these goals are more numerous, complex, diversified, and long term than what conventional political concepts allow us to perceive. The WMW, as a feminist and alternative globalization movement, should be viewed more generally as engaging in cultural politics. It does not simply target the State. It targets the entire society.

Secondly, I would suggest that feminists are constructing and maintaining these transnational solidarities (often at great costs to themselves and their organizations) because in some feminist traditions, to which the WMW belongs, solidarities are in themselves strategies to effect change. The question then becomes: why do they believe this (what are their conceptualizations of the world they are trying to change) and how do they intend to make it happen (what are their strategies of intervention). Movements do not just have repertoires for public action, they also have methodologies, sometimes very explicit and systematized, for their internal processes – and the little or no attention these methodologies have received from the most recognized social movement scholars is certainly noteworthy. These internal processes, at least in the case of many feminist movements, the WMW included, are an integral part of the strategies deployed to effect social change.

The WMW could probably be characterized as a contemporary reinterpretation and re-articulation of certain feminist currents, originating mostly in the 1970s, advocating the organization of grass-roots women's movements in which the most severely oppressed women (those suffering the added burden of poverty, racism, sexist violence, multiple forms of oppression, etc.) would be the leading voices. The awareness-raising and organizing processes themselves become the ground in which women who have been denied the status of subject can take part in a collective process whose goal is to make them into such subjects, individually and politically – processes with profound individual and collective consequences. According to this philosophy, a great deal of effort should be made within the movement to identify and re-work the relations of power among women themselves, who may be from different social backgrounds and, in society in general, may have social identities linked to different power positions. The general idea is to deconstruct these power differentials and invent new and more egalitarian ways of thinking, being and acting together. Thus, women who have been objectified and seldom heard or recognized (in a myriad of complex and intricate ways) have a *social, collective, intersubjective* space in which to reconstruct themselves as subjects of their own lives and as political subjects of the society they live in.<sup>14</sup> There is also the idea that patriarchal strategies of domination include the creation of contexts in which women are isolated from each

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<sup>14</sup> The body of feminist literature and the history of practice exploring these questions in great depth is too extensive and diverse to be cited here. In contemporary Western feminist thought and practice, the voices of radical, socialist as well as African-American and Third World feminists experiencing exclusion and discrimination within the feminist movements have been of tremendous importance in raising these issues and contributing to a deepening of the understanding of power processes and of possible transformative strategies. The continuous exchange of ideas and experiences between intellectuals and activists has also been fundamental to the construction of this knowledge and practice.

other and are deprived of the solidarity that could help them gain more autonomy and bargaining power. Building concrete solidarity then becomes a direct way of transforming the very conditions that enable men to dominate women, hence the conditions that enable the gendered relations of domination to reproduce themselves over time as a social structure. One could say that the feminist movements (and other movements constructed *by and for* oppressed peoples) have to *produce* the subjects that will fight the visible (and less visible) battles. Incidentally, participating in more visible collective public action (protests, demonstrations, speeches, civil disobedience, direct action, politicized artistic expression) *also* serves the purpose of subject production.

A very interesting contribution made in the field of social movement studies that could be useful in conceptualizing such subject formation processes within the movements, and that might prove compatible with the feminist conceptualizations of practice and structure of Ortner and Connell presented above, is that of Nick Crossley (2002, 2003, 2005). This author proposed a reinterpretation of Bourdieu's theory of practice and concept of *habitus* to account for some of the ways social movements effect change in the individual lives of activists, and how social movements sustain mobilization over time. His detailed discussion and reinterpretation of Bourdieu's theory is well beyond the scope of this paper, so I will only briefly sketch the main points that are useful in setting the stage for the working hypotheses I will propose below. According to Crossley, Bourdieu's theorizations of social reproduction can be reworked and used against the grain to think about change and social transformation (2005). Crossley achieves this through his concept of *radical habitus* (2003) or *movement habitus* (2005). Starting with empirical findings showing that participation in protest generates sustained politicization and continued participation in protest actions over time, he goes on to suggest a conceptualization of activism in terms of a sustained disposition toward a particular type of practice that is acquired through participation in that practice. As Bourdieu says of his concept of *habitus*, movement practices are a structured and structuring structure (Crossley 2003: 51):

The generative schemas of movement practice, the movement habitus, moves through the social body, crossing generations, through the force of the very practices it generates and the learning situations they effect. Political activity generates a habitus which generates political activity, drawing in and socializing new recruits, and so on in a circuit of reproduction. However, this does not preclude change. To the contrary. The movement habitus constantly evolves as the contexts of activism demand innovation, improvisation and intelligent adaptation (Crossley 2005: 22).

In the case of the feminist tradition discussed above, I suggest taking this idea a step further to speak of a process that not only creates a new *activist habitus*, but that also has the potential (and certainly the intention) to profoundly transform the different forms of *feminine habitus* (also rooted in class, race and other systems of hierarchical differentiation) of the women that come together in feminist movements. Thus, the feminist movement processes are, at least potentially, spaces of profound transformation of self and embodied patterns of experience. These transformations are effected (or at least initiated) within the movements and thus are collective, intersubjective, that is, *social*, and directly related to the social structure the movement intends to transform.

Taken from there, and recalling the idea presented above that movement practices intend: 1- to constitute in themselves new alternative social practices and 2- to engage in historical actions aimed at provoking the adoption of new social practices in the wider society, it follows that *a movement's internal processes are anthropologically related to their historical actions* and that these two dimensions of movement strategies should be studied together.

### *Some Methodological Proposals*

If, as Crossley thinks, a movement habitus is constructed through movement practice, and if, as I suggest in the case of some feminist practices, these processes potentially include the transformation of women's former habitus, we should pay special attention to the concrete (and less concrete) ways in which this happens. For this, I propose to attribute special significance to the direct study of meetings between people as a methodological hypothesis.

In most feminist movements, it has long been considered fundamentally important to bring women physically together for activities, discussions and public protests; to form collectives that would meet regularly and transform themselves as well as transform the world, through various means such as awareness-raising, politicization, self-reconstruction and confrontation of the social order. Movement meetings and activities could therefore be studied and analyzed as potential matrices of processes of deconstruction and reconstruction of habitus and embodied experience, based on the hypothesis that these are social processes that can take place where and when several people undertake them together.

In a different but complementary vein, most authors are studying the alternative globalization movement by scrutinizing its events, forums and protests (Agrikoliansky et al. 2005; Agrikoliansky and Sommier 2005; Beauzamy 2005; Bertho 2005, to name only a few). Boulianne (2005), describes these spaces as:

... material (or immaterial) spaces of intensive networking around the construction and iteration of meaning creation processes ... It has been noted that these events allow the expression and exploration of differences (based on identity, political goals and strategies) through theoretical and practical innovation ... or the construction of distinct spatialities within a single temporality ... (2005:12) [*Translation*].

An important dimension of these meetings and their associated processes is social power relations: they either maintain/reinforce the social order and the place occupied by each group or individual (if power relations remain unquestioned) or prepare people to contest that place and become the subjects of their struggles by transforming their embodied experiences. And as Beauzamy's analysis (2005) of the Réseau Altermondialiste et Féministe (alternative globalization and feminist network) at the Évian summit shows, *rappports sociaux* (social relations of power) and power dynamics play themselves out in multiple and complex ways throughout the organizing process – and not just during the events or meetings themselves.

One of the possible ways to study an organizing process is to "follow the people." In his famous article, "Multi-Sited Ethnography" (1995), George Marcus proposes the following conceptualization of multi-sited ethnography:

*Transnationalization of Solidarities and Women Movements*  
*Transnationalisation des solidarités et mouvements des femmes*

(...) designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (1995: 105)<sup>15</sup>

Marcus then proposes a set of ideas, of possible modes of construction: to "follow" people, things, metaphors, histories, life stories, conflicts (ibid.:106-110). The overall strategy being proposed here mainly consists in following people, both in the literal sense (in their living environments, activist work, political meetings, demonstrations and other events) and figuratively (by mapping personal and inter-organizational networks based on interviews and archival materials). However, unlike most analysts of social networks, who, once they have mapped a network, limit themselves to the study of its morphology by means of software programs and mathematical theories, I suggest, among other things, to observe and ethnographically reconstitute, to "follow" *from within these networks*: 1- the circulation and reinterpretation of discourses, symbols and ideas; 2- political relationships and power relations between groups and individuals, including the social and sexual division of labour; 3- power relations and dynamics between movements and institutions, including the provenance and distribution of material resources; and 4- power relations within and around the social transformation strategies created by the actors. Also, each of these dimensions should be examined in close connection with the social context in and against which the movement is acting and constructing itself.

Finally, another important aspect to problematize (more than space allows me here), that requires specific methodological strategies, is the conceptualization and analysis of transnational movements as multi-scalar. To follow up on Masson (2006, this volume) and Conway's (forthcoming) suggestions, the "spatial practices" (ibid.) of movements should be studied and conceptualized as processes of social construction of space (and scale). The WMW, for example, is organized at the local, national, regional and global scales, with groups/movements in each geographical location and scale constructing specific relations and processes, specific ways of organizing, articulating their struggles, and situating (and spatializing) themselves within society/ies. I strongly suspect that these spatial and scalar processes involve, in important ways, the re-configuration of power relations and the zones of influence of different actors or groups of actors within and between movements. In keeping with the methodological proposals I have presented above, then, I would suggest that a promising path to take would be to "follow the people" in their collective construction (most likely fraught with power struggles) of these scales. More specifically still, as I myself intend to do in my present research, follow the organizing processes in their vertical constructions, from different spaces constructed as "local" within the movement, to other spaces constructed as "national" and "transnational" – and back again.

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<sup>15</sup> This resembles Foucault's description of his concept of *dispositif* (apparatus): "a resolutely heterogeneous ensemble, including discourses, institutions, architectural layouts, regulatory decision, legislation, administrative measures and scientific pronouncements . . . in short, the spoken as well as the unspoken . . . The *dispositif* itself is the network that can be established among these elements." [Translation] (Foucault 1977: 63 quoted in St-Hilaire 1995: 12).



## *Conclusion*

This paper has presented a brief review of the main theoretical approaches of social movement and transnational social movement studies, seeking to identify their respective stances, contributions and weaknesses with respect to the study of social movements as products and producers of processes of social change. Several conceptual and methodological proposals were then discussed, drawing concrete examples from an ongoing research project on the World March of Women.

I believe that the study of social movements should contribute to a more general and deeper understanding of social relations of power (*rappports sociaux*) and their potential for change; the constitution and transformation of social structures, and of human agency. In this regard, I have attempted to show that the conceptualizations of social movements and transnational movements discussed above present some important weaknesses. I hope I have also succeeded in pointing out the usefulness of the feminist and anthropological conceptualizations of cultural politics, political culture, social structure, social practice, habitus and social relations of power (*rappports sociaux*) discussed in this paper. I have argued that these conceptualizations, as well as the critical intellectual and epistemological postures of the feminist and anthropological frameworks from which they are drawn, give empirical and analytical visibility to dimensions of social movements' transformative practices that I think are of great anthropological significance. One of these is the anthropological inter-relation of movements' internal processes and historical actions in the production of social change. I have discussed that one of the possible ways to apprehend this inter-relation is the study of the production of the social and political subjects through embodied experiences created in and by the movement practices; they then (or rather, simultaneously) take part in social, economic, political, and thus, *cultural* battles to transform the social order. Finally, I have discussed related methodological hypotheses and proposals which should be useful for research on the organizational processes by which transnational social movements produce new or transformed spatial and scalar configurations.

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# TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: ADOPTING A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON TRANSNATIONAL COLLECTIVE ACTION

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## *Introduction*

As part of the emerging of the global social justice movement, women's movements and feminists are faced with a double challenge, confronting in-built patriarchy and social exclusion within global institutions, national and subnational institutions, but also within large sections of the so-called "altermondialiste" movement. Building on Catherine Eschle's questioning, I wish to discuss how it might be to examine whether "exclusionary hierarchies within the movement are being exposed, and received understandings of what constitutes the movement are being challenged." (2005: 1743, see also her other works 2004 and 2001). Such exclusionary processes might be happening at three levels: first, at the theoretical level, at least within the mainstream literature on transnational relations, second at the level of case studies analyses of transnational coalitions and networks within Southeast Asia, and third at the level of the movements and coalition themselves.

Underlying such inquiry is an intuition that as much as transnational activism has become a relative fad, bringing together segments of the international relations literature together with those interested in contentious politics (for example, Tarrow, 2005; Bandy and Smith, 2004; Della Porta and al., 2006), a feminist epistemology has yet to emerge. Such blind spot has as much to do with the challenges and difficulties of undertaking such task as much as with a certain *a priori* about the comparative nature of transnational actors, be it a network, an international non-government organization or a global social movement. This is all the more important given that Southeast Asia remains relatively under analyzed within the realm of transnational collective action literature. As noted by Piper and Uhlin, East and Southeast Asia "constitutes an understudied geographical area in the transnational social movement / civil society literature (as opposed to Europe, North America and Latin America)." (2004: 1).<sup>1</sup>

In the following pages, I discuss how one can understand the emergence of knowledge-based and knowledge-producing organization as one form of transnational activism that seeks to respond to socio-economic and political processes associated with globalization, using a feminist

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<sup>1</sup> However, as the two authors note there are a number of exceptions, such as Aviel (2000), Gurowitz (2000), Lizée (2000), Piper (2001), Piper and Uhlin (2002), Price (1998), and Uhlin (2001 & 2002) as well as the more recent works by Lyons (2005a,b)

perspective. Examining briefly the formation of three regional activist organisations involved in research and advocacy against mainstream economic globalization, I wish to show how women and women's issues while being the object of advocacy remain excluded agents of critical reflections and feminism alien to theoretical engagement within *altermondialiste malestream*. Here, my underlying assumption is that feminist theorizing of transnational activism offers uncharted possibilities for imagining social transformation that can challenge patriarchy be it from within the activist networks and movements or the global and national institutions targeted.

### **I. Transnational Activism:**

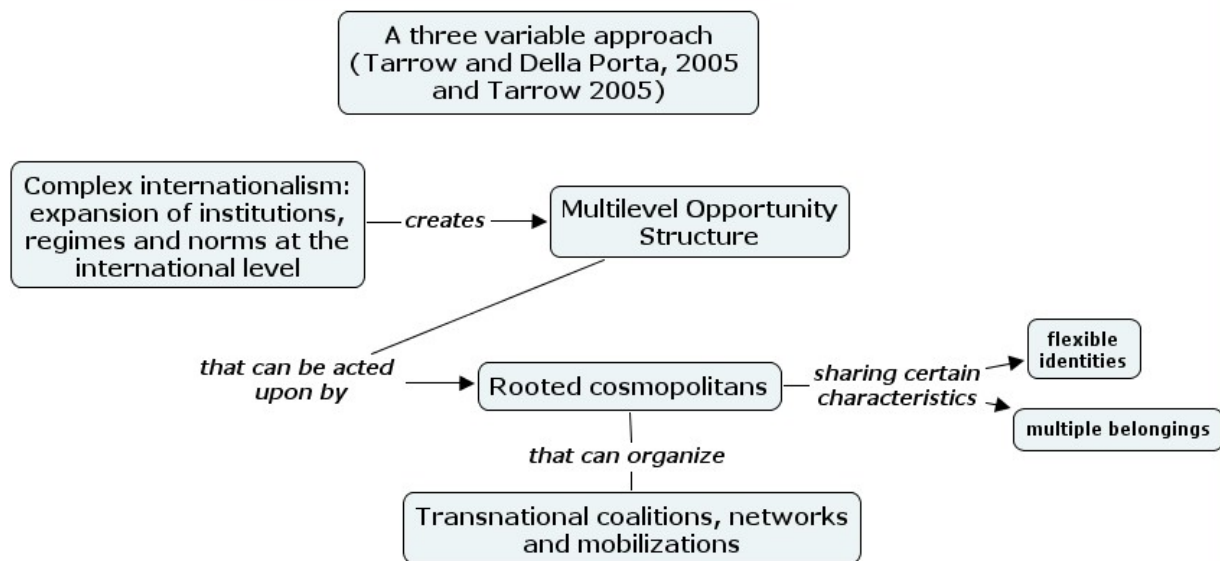
In its bare form, transnational activism has been defined as social movements and other civil society organisations and individuals operating across state borders (Piper and Uhlin 2004: 4-5).<sup>2</sup> This definition was further refined by two social movement specialists, Della Porta and Tarrow who referred to *transnational collective action* as "the coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states, or international institutions." (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005: 7)

Some analysts of transnational activism go even further arguing that we have now entered an era of transnational coalitions moving away from state-centric movements. For now, I would suggest as recent studies argued that the current wave of protest and opposition to the WTO can be explained using recent studies argued (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Tarrow 2005; and Risse-Kappen 1995 and 2002) by three variables: 1) the current complex internationalization (growing density of international institutions, regimes and contacts among states officials and non-state actors and multiplication of linkages between local, national and international issues, (Tarrow 2005, 8); 2) the multi-level political opportunities created by the interaction between complex internationalization and domestic structures (i.e. "institutional features of the state, of society, and of state-society relations" (Risse-Kappen 1995, 20), and 3) the emergence of a stratum of activists best described as *rooted cosmopolitans* ("a fluid, cosmopolitan, but rooted layer of activists and advocates." [Tarrow 2005, 34]).

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<sup>2</sup> The same authors define activism as "political activities that are: (1) based on a conflict of interests and thus are of a contentious nature; (2) challenging or supporting certain power structures; (3) involving non-state actors; and (4) taking place (at least partly) outside formal political arenas." (p.4).

Figure 1 Proposed Explanatory Framework



## II. The “Emergence” of Transnational Activism

It is nearly impossible to identify a single event or an historic birthmark for the emergence and accelerated growth of the current form of transnational activism. Although transnational social movements have been around for a long time,<sup>3</sup> the Zapatista uprising in January 1994 and their call for transcontinental (and even, intergalactic!) resistance to global neoliberalism have been particularly significant (Schulz 1998). Few years later, the “Battle of Seattle” has also been perceived as a catalytic and symbolic moment of this rising wave of transnational mobilization. Québec and Genoa followed in 2001. September 11 and its aftermath momentarily dampened the mobilization efforts. However, the success of the peace mobilizations early 2003 showed its resilience. In fact, the February 15, 2003 peace rallies around the globe represented the “single largest international demonstration in history” (Tarrow and Della Porta, 2005: 227). According to Tarrow and Della Porta, three types of changes help explaining this growing wave of transnational collective action: international change, cognitive change and relational change.

1) *Changes in the international environment*: There are three elements of change in the global environment that need consideration: a) the end of the Cold War with the breakdown of the socialist block and the implosion of the USSR “encouraged the development of forms of non state action” that were previously difficult; b) the rapid expansion of “electronic communication and the spread of inexpensive international travel” have allowed movements and organizations that were previously isolated movements “to communicate and collaborate with one another across borders;” c) the increasing role of international and multilateral actors as illustrated in particular “by the growing power of transnational corporations and international institutions events, like the global summits of the World Bank, the Group of Eight, and especially the World Trade organizations.” (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005: 7-8)

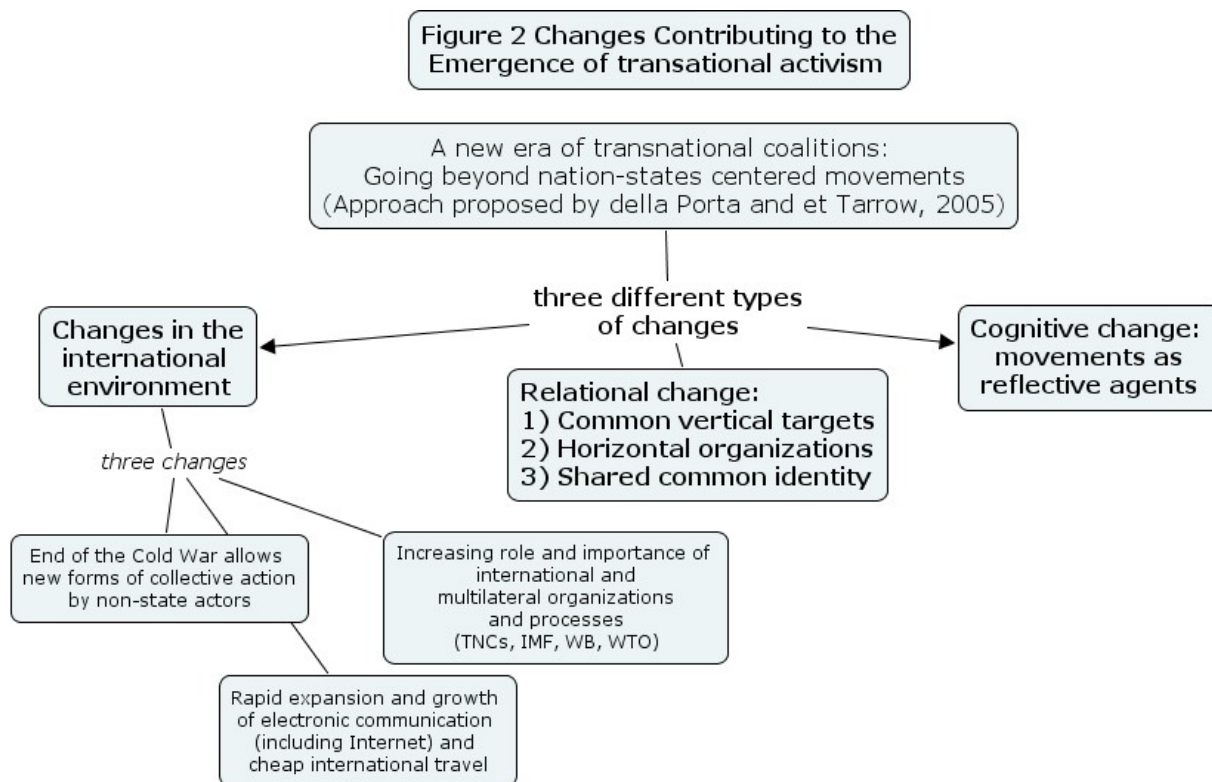
<sup>3</sup> A useful historical treatment of this question can be found in Hopkins (2002).

While being important factors, these changes are not “sufficient” to explain the transnationalization of social protest, two other types of change are essential to consider:

2) *Cognitive change*: Social movements and activists are “reflective” actors. As a result, “their international experiences have been critically analyzed” and “[T]actics and frames that appear to succeed in more than one venue have been institutionalized.” (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005: 8)

3) *Relational change*: The growing possibility of identifying “common ‘vertical’ targets” such as international institutions has also contributed to the ‘horizontal’ formation of transnational coalitions through “the relational mechanisms that are bringing together national actors in transnational coalitions” and “resulting in the growth of common identity and therefore reduces national particularism.” (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005: 9-10)

Transnational activists very seldom work at the transnational level exclusively. Transnational activists are able to create linkages and form coalitions among various types of actors operating on different levels (local, national, regional, international) and respond to various political contexts, each offering a different range of political opportunities. As a result, transnational networks of activists, sometime quite informal, organize “particular campaigns or series of campaign, using a variety of forms of protest, adopting and adapting repertoires of protest from the traditions of different movements.” (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005: 10). Specific and localized concerns are weaved together around the theme of resistance to neoliberal globalization and the need for global social justice (see Bello 2001).



### III. Transnational Activism in Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia, as in many other regions of the world, there has been a growing tendency to organize and work transnationally. The Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and increasingly Indonesia host various forms of transnational activist organizations. While there is relative agreement on this, understanding its significance as well as its impact on political processes, remains open for interpretation (Hewinson, 2001). Today, Bangkok, Manila and Jakarta act as “nodes of transnational activism”, places that “provide not only the practical infrastructure required by transnational NGO networks, but also a political climate that is not too hostile toward civil society activism.” (Piper and Uhlin, 2004: 14, see also Johan Lindquist’s chapter, 109-128).

As further explained by Piper and Uhlin:

[C]onsidering fairly recent and ongoing changes towards democratization in this region, it is not surprising also to find rising civil society activism in general and increasing number of NGOs in particular. Transnational linkages within the region are part and parcel of these development – although numerically maybe not yet as developed as in other parts of the world. (2004: 19)

In particular, issues related to human rights, election monitoring, environmental issues and regional integration as well as economic globalization have been prominent themes of transnational organizing (Timmermann, 2001; Jemadu, 2004; Caouette, 2006). In terms of women’s movements, health issues, both legal and illegal labour migration (including domestic work, sex and entertainment) and trafficking have been central themes leading to the formation of cross-borders networks. Within this spectrum of civil society organizations activist networks involved in policy advocacy and alternative knowledge production have become an important component of transnational activism in Southeast Asia.

### IV. Critical and Alternative Knowledge Production

There is a perceived relevance and *engouement* among activists, NGOs, and Northern funding agencies for alternative source of knowledge on the region. Below, I present a brief review of three transnational organizations (Focus, Asia-Pacific Research Network, and Third World Network) involved in critical and alternative knowledge has become central in the advocacy effort of transnational activists in Southeast Asia (Caouette 2006). Not only each of the organizations examined expanded significantly during the past twenty years, they all sought to link knowledge production, advocacy with social mobilization. Critical knowledge defined as knowledge that can be transformed into action and that can be shared among academics linked to social movements was seen as an imperative to challenge many authoritarian states in the region. As Southeast Asia became increasingly integrated in the global economy and each state linked and affected by global processes, transnational activism relying on alternative source of knowledge became a defining feature of civil society processes, especially so, following the 1997 Financial Crisis. However, as it is revealed women’s issues and perspectives gets subsumed into the discourse, becoming an object of analysis, that is victims of economic globalization of project or a category of investigation, namely as workers in export processing zone, migrant workers, members of the informal sectors, and so forth. One can hardly identify feminist analyses and epistemology in the way they approach globalization which in many ways reflects the dominant discourse on globalisation, acting as a mirror response.

1) Third World Network (TWN):

Third World Network (TWN) describes itself as “an independent non-profit international network of organizations and individuals involved in issues relating to development, the Third World and North South issues”. (TWN 2005) Its international secretariat is based in Penang, Malaysia where it was first established in 1984. TWN has also offices in Delhi, Montevideo, Geneva, and Accra and affiliates in several countries, India, the Philippines, Thailand, Brazil, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Peru, Ethiopia, Uruguay, Mexico, Ghana, South Africa and Senegal. (Ibid)

The history of TWN goes back to the late 1970s. At the time Dr. Martin Khor working Research Director with the Consumers’ Association of Penang (CAP) organized in 1984 with other groups interested in development issues a conference that would lead to the creation of TWN with the goal to “link the local problems of communities in the South to the global policy-making arenas. (Commonwealth Foundation, nd). The formation of TWN took place well before the latest wave of transnational social movement activism referred to as the anti-globalization movement. As two program officers from Inter Pares, a Canada-based social justice organisation and one of the original supporters of TWN: noted: “the creation of TWN emerged from the process of taking a broader view at consumerism linking issues of public health, environment to North-South relations.” (Interview with Seabrooke and Gillespie, 2005) This orientation towards international advocacy was not a coincidence; it was partly a reaction to blocked channels of political expression at the national level. Malaysia’s political system, despite its democratic façade has had a limited tolerance for direct political challenges and has been able to control and effectively prevent the formation of important local and national NGOs. (Loh, 2005 and 2004; Trocki, 1996; Verma, 2002; Weiss, 2004).

This shift from local to national and to international issues is not uncommon among transnational networks. However, what distinguishes TWN from the other organizations here examined, is TWN’s explicit commitment to work when possible with government officials to affect public policies. Through the years, TWN network has been regularly involved with multilateral processes such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN). (Khor nd) Beyond participation in official and parallel summits, TWN produces a wide range of publications (two magazines, its monthly *Third World* Resurgence and its bi-monthly *Third World Economics*, books and monograph and occasional briefing papers, many circulated through Internet). Its website has become its primary portal for the dissemination of its materials and analysis.

Increasingly, TWN has played an important role in supporting and advising trade negotiators from the South around WTO issues, especially through its Africa branch, located in Ghana. In fact, its arena of struggles has become increasingly focussed on international economic processes. Apart from WTO, TWN has been quite active on issues of Biosafety Convention, the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

While it has successfully become a key transnational policy advocacy network, TWN headquarter in Malaysia has been perceived as remotely involved in domestic advocacy and sometimes disconnected from more grassroots work. The shift from local and national to

transnational issues appears to have been in part a response to limited domestic political space, the growing and rapid integration of Malaysia into the world economy bringing home, as well as the capacity of its members to provide alternative analysis and policy discourse on issues of the day for many Third World activists and even government officials. At the same time, TWN analysis does not adopt explicitly a feminist standpoint or a feminist analysis in its writings despite a rich focus on health issues and pharmaceutical companies and several publications dealing with women's issues. Such standpoint would link economic globalization not only with issues of exclusion and disempowerment but also with issues of decision-making processes and the underlying patriarchal structure that allow globalization to persist. Moreover, there is little self-reflexivity in TWN's writings in terms of its own internal decision-making processes.

## 2) Focus on the Global South (Focus)

Conceived between 1993 and 1994 by its first two co-directors, Kamal Malhotra and Walden Bello, Focus on the Global South (hereafter referred as Focus) was officially established in Bangkok, Thailand in January 1995 (Malhotra and Bello, 1999). The two represent in many archetypes of transnational activists. Bello, a Filipino political economist had lived in the US for years where he was very active in the anti-Marcos dictatorship struggle and the international Third World solidarity movement and had worked with a Northern NGO, the Institute for Food and Development Policy - Food First. Malhotra from India had been involved for years with an international NGO, Community Aid Abroad (CAA - Oxfam Australia) and many other local NGOs. As noted in its first external evaluation, Bello and Malhotra agreed on a common set of ideas:

1. Both were dissatisfied with the existing North-South division paradigm;
2. They were also sceptical about mainstream economic analysis, and the economics-culture-politics methodology. (...)
3. They saw the need for linking micro-macro perspectives in analyzing current situations. (...)
4. They both saw the gap between activists who mobilize while holding incomplete or simplistic analysis and researchers / academics who have abilities to make good analysis but lack the opportunities for action. (...);
5. They saw the importance of East and Southeast Asia as a locale in light of its dynamic economic, social and political dimension in global development. (Kaewhtep, 1999: 45-46)

Moving away from a traditional North-South perspective, Focus sought to propose a different conception: "North and South are increasingly redefined as concepts to distinguish between those who are economically able to participate in and benefit from globalised markets and those who are excluded and marginalized from them. (*Ibid*). The reputation, track records and networks of its two co-directors helped the organization take off the ground with a set of funding agencies committing to supporting it. Thailand's relative political stability and the possibility of being associated with the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI) were two key factors why FOCUS head office was established in Bangkok. (*Ibid*) Beginning with a small staff (there were only six in 1996), Focus team expanded rapidly: in 1999, it had already close to 20 staff and about 25 by 2005. It also opened two national offices one in India and one in the Philippines.



Two types of factors can explain such success story in building and consolidating Focus. The first are endogenous and have to do with Focus' capacities to "to build networks and strengthen linkages between and among civil society organisations at the global, national and local level." (Sta. Filomena, 1999: 6) Through the years, Focus staff have been involved not only in the production of research and policy analysis but have also played central role in organizing civil society networks within the region around a range of issues (food security, APEC, ASEAN, ASEM) and have also be closely involved in many global processes, such as the World Social Forum, anti-WTO coalitions (for example, *Our World is not for Sale* campaign) and the peace movement.<sup>4</sup> The second type of factors are exogenous. One was the Asian financial crisis that began in Thailand before spreading to the region that made Focus analyses and staff highly in demand. As one of the external evaluator noted: "[T]he Asian financial crisis and the role of the international financial institutions have undoubtedly become the burning issues of the day. The controversies revolving around WTO and APEC, in different periods, have likewise occupied center stage." (Sta. Filomena 1999, 24) Within few years, Focus became a key reference for civil society organisations in Southeast Asia but within the broader anti-globalization movement.<sup>5</sup>

From its early days, Focus sought to combine analyses on the workings and the impact of regional and global economic processes with studies of local resistance and initiatives with its two main programs: policy-oriented research and analysis on critical regional and global socio-economic issues (the Global Paradigms Program), and documentation, analysis and dissemination of "innovative civil society, grassroots, community-based efforts in democratic, poverty reducing and sustainable development" (the Micro-Macro Paradigm Program) (Kaewhtep 1999, 46). While identifying the limitations of the traditional North-South divide, Focus has not yet pushed further its inquiry of inequality and discrepancy of power relations into the household itself and such processes might be enhanced by economic globalization. Despite that it recognizes in its publications, the different impact of globalization on women. In recent years, the issue of peace and the opposition to US foreign policy has become a key area of research and advocacy for FOCUS. In the wake US-led invasion of Iraq, Focus played a central role in convening a large peace conference in Jakarta that resulted in the "Jakarta Peace Consensus" and brought together representatives and organisations from the large peace movement that had emerged prior to the invasion ("The Jakarta Peace Consensus" n.d.). As it did for the Asian Crisis and the anti-WTO movement, Focus capacities and skills for networking as well as its capacity to produce analyses and policy documents has placed the organisation at the centre of several transnational coalitions on the issue of peace and anti-militarism.

Similarly as well to TWN, gender hierarchies and the differentiated impact of globalization on women remains broadly underspecified, broadly encompassed within the discourse around those excluded and marginalized by economic globalization in Southeast Asia and yet somehow silenced on the participation and resistance of women. Eschle noted the same while reviewing

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<sup>4</sup> As two evaluators pointed out : « [W]e have the impression that Focus has started its action with a strong focus on the production of ideas and analysis but that today it is more and more involved in global strategy and activism. (Banpasirichote, Singh, and Van der Borght 2002: 2)

<sup>5</sup> In its 2003-2005 Work Plan, the organization recognized such particular position: "Focus has also traveled considerably from its starting point. It is today widely considered a 'key player' in the global movement for a different and better world. Its analyses of global developments are extensively consulted, as are its suggestions for structural changes. (Focus on the Global South circa 2003, 3).

what she considered as the 'authoritative movement texts writing: "there is occasional but usually limited, recognition of the participation of women. [...] However, gender is not commented on or presented as relevant to motivations or styles of activism." (2005: 1747)

### 3) Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)

The third organization here examined is the Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN). Established in 1999 was the product of a two year process of consultation and exchanges of materials among organizations from the Asia Pacific involved in research and documentation efforts. (Asia Pacific Research Network 1999, 1) Spearheaded by a Manila-based research and data-banking centre, IBON (especially Antonio Tujan, its director), APRN initial objectives were:

1. Develop the capacity of selected Asian NGOs in the conduct of research;
2. Develop at least one NGO in each target Asian country that can become a research-information provider by introducing data banking and research as a general service;
3. Develop common strategies in research information work through sharing of experiences and raise the general level capacities in research;
4. Develop capacity and common research platform to support social movements in their respective countries in the emerging issues related to the WTO Millennium round, the IMF and the APEC. (*Ibid*, 3)

Its first Annual Conference organised around the theme of trade liberalization brought together 85 individuals from 50 organizations located in 11 different countries including 10 of the 17 founding organizations of the network. Following the Conference, a workshop on research methodologies allowed identifying specific activities for the network.<sup>6</sup> A third event led by IBON, a training-workshop on documentation and data banking was considered particularly useful as participating organizations suggested afterwards that such training be organized on a regular basis.

Afterwards, APRN grew steadily. Through a grant from a Northern funding agency, it established a small secretariat located in IBON office in Manila, responsible for communications among network members, developing and maintaining a website and a listserv and coordinating the publication of the APRN Journal (APRN 2000b, 1). Late 1999, APRN was involved in helping to organize the People's Assembly, a parallel summit held during the WTO Third Ministerial meeting in Seattle.

Early 2000, it conducted a series of workshops in Malaysia that were attended by members and non-members of the network. These activities focussed on information, documentation, research training on women and globalization, food security and the agreement on agriculture (AoA) of the WTO. At the end of 2000, APRN held its Second Annual Conference in Jakarta on the theme of "Poverty and Financing Development" and Attended by about 70 local

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<sup>6</sup> These included "common and/or coordinated research projects", "training in research and related technologies", and "publications." (APRN 1999, 4) Common research areas were: government transparency; the impact of globalization on workers' rights and labor migration, the impact of globalization on food security; and, finally the impact of the GATT-agreement on agriculture.

participants from Indonesia and another 60 foreign participants coming from 20 different countries<sup>7</sup>

In the following years, APRN continued to organize annual conferences that were co-hosted by at least one APRN member. Its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference took place in Sydney, Australia in September 2001 on the theme “Corporate Power or People’s Power: TNCs and Globalization.” (APRN 2001b,1) and brought together over 130 participants. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was held in Guangzhou mainland China in November 2002 and focussed on the WTO, in particular the impact of China’s membership. (APRN 2002a,1).<sup>8</sup> The next year, in November 2003, APRN held its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Beirut on the theme of the “war on terrorism in relation to globalization” given the “aggressive US policy.” (APRN 2003b, 3) Organized for the first time in the Middle East, the Annual Conference was co-organized by APRN and the local host organization, the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND).

Its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from November 25 to 27, 2004 and hosted by UBINIG, a long-standing member of APRN. The theme of the conference was agriculture and food sovereignty. For this conference, organizers “decided to develop the APRN conference from a purely research and academic conference to a more open and public gathering of research institutions and people’s organizations.” (APRN 2004b, 1) It was agreed to “transform the APRN conference into a People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty.” Such convention would then be promoted during the World Food Summit +10 scheduled for 2006. (*Ibid.*, 1) The conference attended by over 500 participants from more than 30 countries resulted in the adoption of the People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty as well as People’s Statement (APRN 2004c; see also APRN/PFSNAP 2004; and APRN 2004c).

Since its establishment, APRN has gradually expanded its range of activities. During the Sydney General Council meeting in 2002, APRN members agreed that APRN would “finally embark on coordinated researches as originally envisioned at the start of the network in Manila three years ago.” (APRN 2002b) It meant that rather instead of financing individual researches carried by APRN member, research would be conducted jointly.” (*Ibid.*, 1) The two initial coordinated research projects were: 1) “Effective Strategies for Confronting TNCs” coordinated by GATT-Watchdog of New Zealand, and 2) “Women and Labour” coordinated by the Center for Women’s Resources (CWR) of the Philippines (APRN 2002b, APRN 2002b, 3; see also, APRN, 2003b).

In the past years, APRN members also participated in the formation of *The Reality of Aid Asia*, therefore providing an Asian contribution to the *Reality of Aid* network aimed at monitoring and

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<sup>7</sup> Participants came from a range of organisations: research institutes, NGO, government, academia, popular organizations and the media. APRN organised jointly the conference with a local organization, the International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID), an APRN member. By then, APRN had expanded its membership to 23 organisations based in 12 countries of the Asia Pacific. (APRN 2000a, 1)

<sup>8</sup> The Conference was organized with the assistance of two organizations, the Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC) and the Guangzhou All China Federation of Trade Union (ACFTU). In the end and despite some visa difficulties, a total of 90 participants joined the conference, including 40 foreign participants, of which 27 were APRN members.

documenting international development assistance programs and projects. Some APRN members have also been involved in the *Peoples' Movement Encounter* at the Hyderabad Asian Social. (*Ibid.*, 7). APRN has also continued to be involved in global and regional activities, including a policy workshop on regional cooperation and human rights in Asia, held in the Philippines in June 2004, and the co-organizing of international conference "Bandung in the 21st Century: Continuing the struggle for Independence, Peace against Imperialist War and Globalization," held in April 14-16, 2005, in Bandung, Indonesia.

Prior to the WTO 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, APRN organized with the assistance of the Asia Monitor Resource Center (AMRC) and the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), a "Policy-Research Conference on Trade" in July 2005 to strengthen the advocacy of civil society organisations (CSOs) and social movements. During the WTO Ministerial, APRN members participated not only in providing analysis but also in officially marching under the same banner.

After seven years of existence, APRN, supported by grants from Northern NGOs and funding agencies has been able to locate itself as a key research and advocacy network in Southeast Asia primarily, but also with members in the broader Asia-Pacific region (Interview with Tony Tujan 2005). It has moved from 17 to 35 member based in 20 different countries. While contributing to the development of research capacity of NGOs, it has also become more involved in advocacy efforts.

Similarly to the previous two organizations, the presence of key individuals skilled at organizing networks, animating processes and seeking financial assistance coupled with the growing density of international and regional processes (economic integration, financial liberalization, including the 1997 crisis) and a relatively open political space in several Asian countries that allows for the organizing of parallel and critical conferences, have interacted and account for the rapid expansion of APRN. Nonetheless, like for Focus and TWN, APRN's discourse remains well within the "*malestream*" activist discourse on globalization as noted by Eschle:

The common sense understanding of globalization clearly places economic processes center stage. In particular, most analyses focus on the role of corporation and international financial institutions such as the WTO, which push for a neoliberal agenda of 'free trade', the reduction of state barriers to and intervention in trade processes, and the continuing integration of domestic markets. (...) Indeed, an emphasis on the determining impact of the global economy has become so widespread that it now dominates approaches to globalization in academia, activist circles, and the media and is characteristic of both neoliberal advocacy of globalization and critical opposition. (Eschle 2005: 1750)

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have tried to show how we have entered a new cycle of mobilization characterized by transnational collective action. This form of collective action connects activist networks, NGOs and social movements across borders. However, within dominant analyses and discourses feeding large segments of the antiglobalization movement, one can see how

women's perspectives and feminist standpoints are often bypassed or not considered. While this is true in general of the mainstream *altermondialisme*, it is also the case to different extents within three key networks involved in alternative discourse production in Southeast Asia.

In Southeast Asia, transnational activism has been a defining feature of civil society processes, especially following the 1997 Financial Crisis. This form of activism can be seen both as a complement to local and national activism as well as an activist modality on its own. Concrete impact and policy influence of such form of activism takes different forms and is often difficult to trace in a linear way. At one level, transnational advocacy efforts produces shared identities and a common understanding of issues. It also generates common campaigns and proposals that can be put forward during regional and international gatherings and implemented both at the regional and national levels. In some cases, transnational activism influences the dominant discourse and forces its tenants to defend and justify their positions. In other instances, reformist policy-makers interested in developing alternative proposals to the more orthodox neoliberal agenda are seeking the expertise and knowledge generated by transnational networks. Transnational activism can expose the tensions and divisions that exist between states and economic blocs.

By connecting community organizations and local NGOs' struggles to a broader set of issues and struggles, transnational activists are able to amplify and enrich both the work being conducted at the very local level and the advocacy and policy work conducted regionally and globally. In seeking to develop a richer understanding of its significance on the medium and long term as well as its contribution to women's issues, one is confronted with two types of gaps within the existing literature on Southeast Asian transnational activism. The first is how to assess whether transnational activism in Southeast Asia has been able to influence regional and global economic policies and contribute to the strengthening of democratic deliberative processes and fostering alternative practices that can improve people's livelihoods.<sup>9</sup> The second major gap is the lack of feminist perspective on Southeast Asian transnational activism. Much of the literature remains rooted in theoretical models such as Tarrow (2005) or even Piper and Uhlin's discussion of the issue of power and democracy that fails to problematize women's issues and / or develop a feminist understanding of transnational activism. Approaching transnational activism from a feminist perspective might be essential if one wishes to unpack the dominant activist antiglobalization discourse. Much of the alternative discourse produced to feed and impulse transnational activism remain rooted in classical economic approach to globalization that is both rooted in classical Marxist discourse on IR and non-gendered perspective on contentious politics. Researchers such as Eschle argues that this might be changing as the World Social Forum might be showing writing that "feminism has found increasing purchase at the forum but is still not fully integrated. It remains heavily dependent on the presence of actual feminists, and this presence remains conditional and contested." (2005: 176)

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<sup>9</sup> Recent works of Jonathan Fox (2002) and Fox and Brown (1998) can provide a useful starting point; see as well Clark (2003). Academics such Kevin Hewinson also questioned their analyses, in particular those of TWN and Focus on the Global South seeing those as populist and somehow simplistic. (2001 : 233)

### *Feminist International Relations: A Possible Window?*

Within political science, it is fair to argue that the field of International Relations has been probably one of the late comers in terms of assimilating insights from feminism. Identified as part of the post-positivist approaches, feminist theorizing in international theories questions assumptions around objectivity and neutrality of categories. Scholars, such as Anne Tickner, have successfully revealed how classical realism is rooted within a masculine vision of reality. Moreover such vision reifies values that posit statu quo by claiming that it constitutes the only vision possible. Others such as Cynthia Enloe (1989) has revealed systemic bias within the International Relations literature often failing to integrate women's perspective.

If one can agree that the study of transnational activism has brought together a certain tradition of the international relations literature broadly referred as transnational relations, it has failed or has to yet consider the insights that feminist IR could bring, especially in disentangling the gendered dynamics and biases that are present and built within the emerging transnational activist discourse and practices. Thus, as did the pioneers in feminist IR approaches questioning foundational dogmas of realist and liberal approaches (Harding 1987; Young 2004; Peterson 2004), a feminist reading of transnational activism in Southeast Asia might contribute to open unexplored avenues of knowledge creation but also address directly the dilemmas and challenges of activism that seeks to link the local to the global.

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# MOUVEMENTS INTERNATIONAUX DE FEMMES ET SOLIDARITÉS DES INTÉRÊTS AU XIX<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE

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## *Introduction*

Des mouvements sociaux sont actifs sur la scène internationale depuis le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle afin de revendiquer des droits politiques, économiques, sociaux, culturels et même sexuels pour les femmes. Les bases de ces mouvements sont jetées en divers lieux : à Londres, en 1840, dans les coulisses de la première Convention mondiale anti-esclavagiste; lors des congrès internationaux sur les femmes organisés en parallèle des expositions universelles dont les premiers ont lieu à Paris en 1879 et 1889; à Washington en 1888 lors de la rencontre féministe commémorant Seneca Falls et la création de groupes internationaux de femmes à cette occasion notamment l'International Council of Women; ou encore lors de la première conférence de l'Internationale socialiste des Femmes à Stuttgart, Allemagne en 1907. Plusieurs des participantes à ces rencontres sont partie prenante de la mise sur pied des premiers groupes de femmes internationaux pour le suffrage universel, pour la paix, et pour les droits des femmes en diverses matières. Certains de ces groupes de femmes sont actifs auprès de la Société des Nations de 1920 à 1939. Puis, lors de la création des Nations Unies en 1944-1945, plusieurs groupes de femmes s'unissent à d'autres groupes mixtes afin de revendiquer la reconnaissance d'un statut pour les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) au sein de cette institution internationale. Ces groupes ont également veillés à ce que l'ONU accorde une attention particulière aux droits des femmes.

Avant 1920, les foires, expositions et congrès internationaux (y compris les rencontres organisées par des groupes autonomes à portée internationale) sont parmi les premières scènes mondiales où des discours sur les droits des femmes sont débattus. À notre avis, ces événements ont aussi contribué à la création de scènes permettant à une société civile mondiale d'émerger et de consolider par la suite des organisations politiques internationales. Dans cet article, nous présentons un bref survol historique des premières scènes internationales où des femmes se sont mobilisées en faveur de leurs droits. Comme nous comptons au nombre de ces premières scènes plusieurs expositions universelles du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, une attention particulière est portée à ces expositions et la place occupée par divers mouvements sociaux en leur sein. Finalement, comme une des premières conférences mondiales sur les femmes de grande envergure a eu lieu lors de l'Exposition universelle colombienne de Chicago en 1893, nous présentons plus en détails le contexte de cette exposition et divers rapports de pouvoir qui se sont exercés à cette occasion. Pour les fins de l'analyse, nous adoptons un cadre d'interprétation intersectionnel qui veille à mettre en lumière les rapports de pouvoir en jeu lorsqu'il est question de genre, de race, de classe et de sexualités.

### 1.1. Premières mobilisations internationales de groupes de femmes

Lors de la première Convention mondiale anti-esclavagiste tenue à Londres en juin 1840, les femmes déléguées, trois américaines blanches – Abby Kelly, Esther Moore et la Quaker Lucretia Mott – sont exclues des débats en raison de leur sexe (Midgley, 1992 : 172). Dès l'ouverture de la Convention, la question de l'inclusion des femmes fait l'objet d'un débat au cours duquel une majorité d'hommes du clergé s'y opposent. Il en résulte un vote défavorable à la participation des femmes. Les femmes peuvent assister aux débats seulement à partir de la galerie. À l'issue du vote et afin de montrer leur appui à la cause des femmes, des hommes tels que le délégué Afro-américain Charles Lenox Remond et l'abolitionniste radical blanc, William Lloyd Garrison à la tête de l'American Anti-Slavery Society qui a initié la pratique de la participation mixte, refusent de prendre leur place de délégués et vont rejoindre les femmes dans la galerie (Midgley, 1992 : 123, 170; McElroy, 2003). Deux militantes blanches anti-esclavagistes britanniques, Elizabeth Pease et Anne Knight, tentent également d'organiser une rencontre formelle entre les femmes lors de la convention de 1840 mais la direction du groupe organisateur – la British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) – s'oppose à ce projet (Midgley, 1992 : 162). C'est lors de rencontres informelles que - les femmes assistant à cette convention échangent leurs points de vue et discutent de leurs conditions (Stienstra, 1994 : 47). Plusieurs femmes américaines et britanniques ayant participé à cet événement rapportent que cette exclusion a été un déclencheur qui les a amené à s'impliquer dans la cause pour l'égalité politique des femmes (Midgley, 1992 : 162). C'est seulement lors de la convention anti-esclavagiste de 1855 que les femmes obtiennent finalement le droit d'y participer (Midgley, 1992 : 170).

En 1848, les Américaines blanches Lucretia Mott et Elizabeth Cady Stanton qui se sont rencontrées à la convention abolitionniste de Londres en 1840, organisent avec le concours de militantes abolitionnistes, pour la tempérance ou d'autres associations volontaires, une convention sur les droits des femmes à Seneca Falls aux États-Unis, les 19 et 20 juillet 1848 dans la Chapelle Méthodiste de Wesleyan. Deux cent femmes et 40 hommes participent à cette convention, y compris Frederick Douglass, abolitionniste afro-américain (Clinton et Lunardini, 1999 : p. 114). Une « Declaration of Sentiments » sur le modèle de la Déclaration d'indépendance américaine, et des résolutions en faveur du droit des femmes et des réformes en matières conjugales et de propriété privée sont adoptées par 68 femmes et 32 hommes lors de cette convention<sup>1</sup>.

En 1876, lors de la *Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition*, première exposition universelle<sup>2</sup> tenue aux États-Unis, le gouvernement américain consent à la construction d'un Pavillon de la femme où

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<sup>1</sup> [<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/17.htm>] et [<http://women.amnestyusa.org/womenshistory/index.asp>] [17 mai 2005].

<sup>2</sup> Comme son nom l'indique, la *Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition*, visait à souligner le centenaire de la confédération américaine. Les thèmes de cette foire étaient le progrès et l'innovation technologique. Dans le Machinery Hall, les personnes qui visitaient la foire pouvaient voir une femme faire fonctionner une machine fabriquant 80 000 vis par jour et les visiteurs étaient informés qu'une seule personne pouvait faire fonctionner dix de ces machines à la fois (Rydell, 1984 : 33).

des réalisations féminines sont exposées<sup>3</sup>. Bien que des femmes afro-américaines participent à la levée de fonds pour l'exposition, aucun espace au sein de ce pavillon ne leur est alloué (Rydell, 1984 : 28). De plus, le comité responsable du pavillon s'oppose au souhait formulé par des suffragettes telles que Susan B. Anthony et Elizabeth Cady Stanton qu'une exposition sur les luttes pour l'obtention du droit de vote des femmes soit présentée au public<sup>4</sup>. Par contre, afin de faire avancer leur cause, ces suffragettes remettent une Déclaration des droits des femmes aux dignitaires participant à la cérémonie célébrant le centenaire de l'indépendance américaine, le 4 juillet 1876 et elles lisent publiquement cette déclaration sur l'Independance Square (Pepchinsky, 2000). Ironiquement, les organisateurs de l'exposition dédient aux femmes le jour des élections nationales, le 7 novembre, afin qu'elles puissent visiter la foire pendant que les hommes exercent leurs droits de vote<sup>5</sup>.

Le premier *Congrès international des droits des femmes* a lieu du 29 juillet au 9 août 1878 en parallèle de l'exposition universelle de Paris. Ce Congrès est organisé par la Société pour l'amélioration du sort de la femme sous la présidence de Maria Deraismes<sup>6</sup>. Onze pays et seize organisations participent officiellement à ce congrès (Moses : 1984 : 207), dont deux associations ouvrières (Albistur et Armogathe, 1977 : p. 524). Deux cent dix neuf personnes (dont 107 hommes et 112 femmes) s'inscrivent officiellement en tant que participantes dont neuf députés, deux sénateurs et cinq conseillers municipaux de Paris (Moses : 1984 : 207). En plus des inscriptions officielles, plus de 400 « visiteurs » vont entendre les communications et les discours présentés à la Salle du Grand-Orient située dans les bâtiments des francs-maçons (Moses, 1984 : 207). Hubertine Auclert qui participe dans les premiers temps au Comité d'organisation de ce Congrès entend y affirmer l'égalité intégrale des sexes, y compris le droit de vote, mais Léon Richer et Maria Deraismes s'y opposent. Alors, elle démissionne du comité et publie le discours qu'elle a préparé sous le titre : *Le droit politique des femmes, question qui n'est pas traitée au Congrès international des femmes* (Rabaut, 1978 : 174).

En 1888, afin de souligner les 40 ans de la *Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention*, Susan B. Anthony et Elizabeth Cady Stanton organisent une rencontre commémorative à Washington sur les droits des femmes ainsi qu'un Conseil international des femmes qui dure huit jours<sup>7</sup>. Pour

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<sup>3</sup>Un premier pavillon sur les travaux féminins (*Pavillon der Frauenarbeiten*) a été construit lors de l'exposition universelle de Vienne en 1873 (Mary Pepchinski : 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Harvard University Library Open Collections Program, *Women Working, 1870-1930*, « Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, 1876 », [[http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/events\\_centennial.html](http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/events_centennial.html)] [23 mai 2005].

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Dès 1873, l'Association pour le Droit des femmes (fondée en 1870 par Léon Richer, Maria Deraismes, Anna Féresse-Deraismes, Louise Michel, Paule Minck, André Lép, et M. et Mme Jules Simon), a annoncé son intention d'organiser le premier congrès féministe international en septembre de cette année (Moses, 1984 : 173, 195). Mais le projet a été reporté en raison d'un climat politique incertain (dont l'élection en mai 1873 du Maréchal de Mac Mahon, candidat monarchiste à la présidence de la République et qui restera en poste jusqu'en janvier 1879) (Moses, 1984 : 195). Maria Deraismes a également été l'une des membres fondatrices de la loge maçonnique le Droit humain [[www.droit-humain.org/uk/History/Famous\\_masons/Maria\\_Deraismes/maria\\_deraismes.html](http://www.droit-humain.org/uk/History/Famous_masons/Maria_Deraismes/maria_deraismes.html)] [6 septembre 2005].

<sup>7</sup> Susan B. Anthony et Elizabeth Cady Stanton ont fondé en 1869 la National Woman Suffrage Association aux États-Unis. Pour la célébration des 40 ans de Seneca Falls, Anthony et Stanton ont aussi invité l'association rivale, soit l'American Woman Suffrage Association également fondée en 1869 par Lucy

cette occasion, elles font parvenir des invitations à plusieurs organisations nationales américaines et à plusieurs organisations de femmes de diverses nationalités (Clinton et Lunardini, 1999 : p. 125). Lors de cette rencontre, le National Council of Women des États-Unis et l'International Council of Women (ICW) sont mis sur pied de manière permanente<sup>8</sup>. En plus des cinquante et une organisations de femmes américaines, des déléguées du Canada, de la Grande-Bretagne, de la France, de la Norvège, du Danemark, de la Finlande et de l'Inde participent à cette rencontre (Sewall, 1894 : 61)<sup>9</sup>. À ses débuts, l'International Council of Women ne compte que des groupes américains comme membres (Käppelli, 1991 : p. 505). Pour remédier en partie à l'absence de groupes non américains, sont élues au premier conseil d'administration de l'International Council of Women : une présidente anglaise (Milicent Garrett Fawcett qui démissionne en 1892); une vice-présidente et une secrétaire américaines (Clara Barton et Rachel Foster Avery); une secrétaire d'archives ('*recording secretary*') danoise (Kristine Frederiksen); et une trésorière française (Isabelle Bogelot<sup>10</sup>) (Sewall, 1894 : 60). C'est seulement après la première rencontre quinquennale à Chicago en 1893 que des conseils nationaux sont officiellement fondés dans d'autres pays : Canada<sup>11</sup> (octobre 1893), Allemagne (1894), Angleterre (1895), Suède (1896), Italie et Hollande (1898), Danemark (1899), Suisse (1900), France (1901), Autriche (1902), Hongrie et Norvège (1904), Belgique (1905), Bulgarie et Grèce (1908), Serbie (1911) et Portugal (1914) (Käppelli, 1991 : p. 506)<sup>12</sup>.

Lors de l'exposition universelle organisée à Paris en 1889 afin de commémorer le centenaire de la Révolution française, l'État français opte pour le financement d'un nombre important de conférences, congrès et expositions. Au nombre de ceux-ci, l'État subventionne le premier *Congrès international des œuvres et institutions féminines* organisé en juillet 1889 sous la présidence du politicien français Jules Simon (Albistur et al., 1977 : 524; Moses, 1984 : 221). Ce congrès a pour but de décrire le rôle joué par les femmes françaises dans les œuvres charitables, l'éducation, les arts, la science et la littérature. Un congrès alternatif est également organisé par Léon Richer et Maria Deraismes : le *deuxième Congrès français et international du droit des femmes* qui se tient à Paris du 25 au 29 juin 1889 (Moses, 1984 : 221 et Albistur et al., 1997 : 524). Ce congrès couvre quatre sections (historique, économique, morale, législative) et traite davantage des droits politiques des femmes (Moses, 1984 : 222). Malgré des dissensions sur la nomination

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Stone. En 1890, les deux groupes se fusionnent sous le nom de la National American Woman Suffrage Association (Clinton et Lunardini, 1999 : p. 125).

<sup>8</sup> Les membres fondatrices du National Council of Women sont : Susan B. Anthony, Clara Barton, Lucy Stone Blackwell, Julia Ward Howe, May Wright Sewall, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Frances Willard, selon les informations contenues sur le site Internet du National Council of Women des États-Unis [[www.ncw-usa.org/History.html](http://www.ncw-usa.org/History.html)], [9 juin 2005]. En 2005, l'International Council of Women regroupe 63 associations nationales [[www.icw-cif.org/NCs.htm](http://www.icw-cif.org/NCs.htm)], [9 juin 2005].

<sup>9</sup> [[http://www.ncwc.ca/ip\\_icw.html](http://www.ncwc.ca/ip_icw.html)] [20 septembre 2005].

<sup>10</sup> Isabelle Bogelot, de foi protestante, était alors rattachée aux Oeuvres des libérées de St-Lazare, Paris. Elle a été la seule déléguée française à participer à la rencontre de Washington en 1888 (Sewall, 1894 : 634-635).

<sup>11</sup> La première présidente de l'association canadienne était Lady Aberdeen, épouse du Gouverneur général du Canada [[http://www.ncwc.ca/ip\\_icw.html](http://www.ncwc.ca/ip_icw.html)] [17 mai 2005].

<sup>12</sup> Il manque dans cette liste la Finlande. Selon Sewall, dès mai 1893, des conseils étaient en formation en Finlande, Norvège, Suède, Danemark et existaient déjà en France, en Belgique et au Canada (Sewall, 1894 : 44). En 1902, des groupes américains se sont dissociés de l'International Council of Women et ont formé l'International Women's Suffrage Association (Stienstra, 1994 : 49).



de Jules Simon à titre de président, les groupes organisateurs des deux congrès ne sont pas hostiles l'un vis-à-vis l'autre (Moses, 1984 : 222)<sup>13</sup>. D'ailleurs, certaines organisatrices du congrès officiel (Jeanne Schmahl, Isabelle Bogelot et Émilie de Morsier<sup>14</sup>) font des dons au congrès alternatif. Plus d'une centaine d'organisations provenant de vingt-six nationalités différentes participent au congrès officiel du gouvernement français (Sewall, 1894 : 61). Au congrès alternatif, on note la présence de plusieurs personnalités politiques, la participation étrangère de six pays mais dans l'ensemble, une audience faible de 176 personnes et 13 groupes (Albistur et al., 1977 : 524). Les inscriptions sont inférieures à celles du congrès de 1878. Cette baisse de participation peut être attribuée en partie aux frais d'inscription élevés et au fait que les rencontres ne sont pas accessibles au public non inscrit (Moses, 1984 : 222). May Wright Sewall, présidente du National Council of Women des États-Unis est la seule déléguée américaine à ces deux congrès. Elle profite de sa présence pour promouvoir l'International Council of Women (Weimann, 1981 : 524). À la fin du congrès officiel, une résolution est adoptée afin d'approuver le fait que le Conseil international des femmes (ICW) devienne permanent et d'inviter les membres de l'ICW à mettre sur pied des conseils nationaux dans leurs pays respectifs (Sewall, 1894 : 61). Des discussions ont également lieu afin de promouvoir l'idée d'une rencontre de l'ICW en 1893.

Lors de la rencontre de l'ICW de 1888, les participantes ont convenu informellement que la première rencontre quinquennale de l'ICW permanent aura lieu à Londres en 1893 (Sewall, 1894 : 61). Par contre, en raison de l'annonce de la tenue d'une exposition colombienne universelle à Chicago pour l'année 1892 (en fait 1893), les groupes de femmes américains proposent de tenir la rencontre de l'ICW au cours de cette exposition et d'organiser à cette occasion un congrès mondial des femmes représentantes<sup>15</sup>. De nombreuses activités sont organisées par des femmes au cours de l'exposition de Chicago. Le gouvernement américain consent à la mise sur pied d'un Board of Lady Managers (pour compenser le fait qu'aucune femme ne soit nommée à la commission nationale gérant l'exposition). Ce Board fait construire un Bâtiment de la femme au sein duquel plusieurs congrès sur les femmes sont organisés tout au long de l'exposition colombienne qui dure du 5 mai au 31 octobre 1893. De plus, de nombreux congrès mondiaux sont organisés sous les auspices du World's Congress Auxiliary, dont le *World Congress of Representative Women*<sup>16</sup>. Un comité composé de plusieurs membres du National Council of Women des États-Unis dont la présidente (May Wright Sewall) et la secrétaire (Rachel Foster Avery) est nommé afin d'organiser ce congrès. Le National Council of Women des États-Unis défraye les coûts de déplacement et de séjours des déléguées étrangères

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<sup>13</sup> De plus, le gouvernement français a également tenté d'imposer la présidence de Jules Simon pour le Congrès des femmes représentantes. Les organisatrices américaines se sont vivement opposées à ce projet de donner à un homme la présidence de leur congrès (Weimann, 1981 : 516).

<sup>14</sup> Émilie de Morsier, tout comme Isabelle Bogelot, était rattachées aux Oeuvres des libérées de St-Lazare.

<sup>15</sup> On peut se demander si la démission de la présidente anglaise est liée à ce changement. La recommandation de changer le lieu de la rencontre a été formulée lors de la rencontre triennale de la National Council of Women des États-Unis en 1891 et a été soumise au conseil d'administration de l'ICW (Sewall, 1894 : 43).

<sup>16</sup> J'ai été mise sur la piste de ce congrès lors de la lecture du livre de bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman* (1981), où elle indique que Fannie Barrier Williams (une militante féministe afro-américaine) a présenté à cette occasion une communication qui souligne l'importance d'une solidarité entre les femmes blanches et noires pour la cause de toutes les femmes.

participant à ce congrès. Plus de 600 conférencières provenant d'une diversité de pays prennent la parole au cours des 76 séances tenues sur l'ensemble de la semaine du 15 au 21 mai au Art Institute (Sewall, 1894 : v). Ce congrès attire une assistance totale de 150 000 personnes et réunit cent vingt-six groupes nationaux de femmes de seize pays américains et européens<sup>17</sup> (Sewall, 1894 : 5). Comme il s'agit, du premier congrès international sur les femmes de grande envergure, nous reviendrons plus loin sur cet événement et sur le contexte dans lequel il a lieu.

Lors de l'Exposition universelle de Paris en 1900, deux autres congrès internationaux sont organisés : un congrès officiel en juin 1900 - le *deuxième Congrès international des œuvres et institutions féminines* - et un congrès semi-officiel du 5 au 8 septembre - le *quatrième Congrès international de la condition féminine et du droit des femmes* (Albistur et al., 1977 : 524-525). Elisabeth Renaud et Louise Saumoneau du Groupe féministe socialiste assistent au congrès semi-officiel sans y avoir été invitées. Elisabeth Renaud profite de ce congrès pour proposer que les domestiques soient assimilées aux autres travailleurs au regard des conditions de repos et d'hygiène, dont le droit au repos du dimanche (Rabaut, 1978 : 207; Boxer, 1978 : 95). Plusieurs s'opposent à cette proposition dont Madame Wiggishof, qui est alors la vice-présidente de la Société pour l'amélioration du sort de la femme et la revendication de ses droits et qui fondera le Conseil national des femmes françaises en 1901 (Rabaut, 1978 : 207-208)<sup>18</sup>. Un des participants déclare : « nous ne sommes pas ici pour faire du communisme ni du socialisme mais pour s'occuper des droits des femmes » (Rabaut, 1978 : 207-208). Ces discussions illustrent bien les tensions entre les féministes bourgeoises, qui contrôlent l'organisation de ces congrès internationaux, et les féministes socialistes.

Plusieurs autres congrès internationaux sur les droits des femmes et les œuvres féminines sont organisés en France. Par exemple, un *dixième Congrès international des femmes : « œuvres et institutions féminines. Droit des femmes* est organisé à Paris en juin 1913 sans qu'une exposition universelle ait lieu. Albistur et al. notent que ce congrès est inauguré par le Ministre de l'Intérieur, qu'il y a une délégation étrangère importante, que le recrutement est surtout bourgeois et que des associations philanthropiques, de professions libérales et d'enseignantes y participent (Albistur et al, 1977 : 525).

L'idée de tenir des conférences mondiales sur les femmes au XXe siècle tire donc en partie son origine des premiers congrès internationaux sur les femmes et des premières organisations internationales non gouvernementales de femmes mises sur pied au cours du XIXe siècle sous le leadership de femmes blanches, bourgeoises et occidentales (principalement américaines). La majorité des personnes impliquées dans les premiers groupes internationaux de femmes sont des bourgeoises blanches américaines ou européennes. Leurs revendications portent sur la reconnaissance de droits politiques aux femmes et au droit à la propriété privée. Par contre, la

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<sup>17</sup> En plus des 56 organisations américaines, des associations provenant de 15 pays différents participent au Congrès : Belgique (1), Canada (6), Danemark (2), Angleterre (30), Finlande (2), France (7), Allemagne (9), Irlande (1), Italie (1), Nouvelle Galles du Sud (1), Norvège (2), Écosse (3), Amérique du Sud (1), Suède (3) et Suisse (1). Par contre, les conférencières ne sont pas toutes rattachées à des associations et certaines proviennent des pays suivants : Grèce, Pologne, Syrie, Brésil, Siam, Islande.

<sup>18</sup> Madame Wiggishof, a également été une des cofondatrices avec Maria Desraismes de la loge franc-maçonnique « Le Droit humain » (Rabaut, 1978 : 207-208).

revendication des droits économiques et au travail pour toutes les classes de femmes posent problèmes.

Ces dernières revendications sont plutôt portées par des féministes socialistes. Par contre, les féministes socialistes, peu présentes dans les organisations bourgeoises, optent plutôt pour la solidarité avec le mouvement ouvrier et la lutte des classes. Elles se mobilisent sur la scène internationale lors des Internationales socialistes. La première conférence de l'Internationale socialiste des femmes (ISF) a lieu à Stuttgart en 1907, juste avant la tenue du grand congrès socialiste<sup>19</sup>. À cette occasion, les cinquante-huit déléguées venues de pays d'Europe et d'outre-mer (dont de l'Inde et du Japon) décident d'établir un secrétariat international sous la direction de Clara Zetkin en Allemagne<sup>20</sup>. En 1910, lors de la seconde rencontre de l'Internationale socialiste des femmes, le principe de la journée internationale des femmes est établi (ISF, 2005?). À cette même occasion, les déléguées adoptent une résolution en faveur de la paix. Malheureusement, en 1912, la première guerre des Balkans se déclenche et en 1914, la Première Guerre mondiale éclate. Le déclenchement de la Première Guerre mondiale a pour effet d'empêcher la tenue d'une troisième rencontre de l'International socialiste à Vienne en 1914 (Stienstra, 1994 : 49). Par contre, en mars 1915, une troisième conférence internationale socialiste des femmes a lieu à Berne. Il s'agit de la première conférence internationale socialiste depuis le début de cette guerre. En raison des difficultés d'organisations des mouvements ouvriers au cours des deux guerres mondiales, cette organisation suspend ses activités à plusieurs reprises jusqu'en 1955<sup>21</sup>. C'est également à cette période que la Women's International League for Peace and Freedom est fondée en 1915 par des militantes de l'International Council of Women afin de s'opposer à la Première Guerre mondiale (Stienstra, 1994 : p. 49).

Afin de saisir le contexte dans lequel les premiers congrès internationaux sur les femmes ont lieu avant la Première Guerre mondiale, il importe de porter un regard plus spécifique sur les expositions universelles et le traitement de la question du genre, de la race et de la classe à ces occasions. Après un bref survol de la place des femmes dans les premières expositions universelles, nous étudions plus en détails le cas de l'exposition colombienne universelle de Chicago en 1893, étant donné qu'à cette occasion un bâtiment de la femme est construit et qu'un premier congrès sur les femmes représentantes de grande envergure est organisé.

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<sup>19</sup> Boxer note qu'à ce congrès, les femmes accompagnent souvent leur frère, père ou mari ce qui confirme la plainte formulée par la militante Docteur Madeleine Pelletier qui dénonçait le manque d'ouverture de l'Internationale vis-à-vis les femmes qui cherchent à se joindre au parti de leur propre chef (Boxer, 1978 : 102).

<sup>20</sup> Le mouvement socialiste français a été sévèrement réprimé après la Commune de 1870, dont les leaders féministes socialistes. Ceci explique en partie le leadership pris par le féminisme républicain et réformiste en France entre 1870 et 1914 (Rabaut, 1978; Moses, 1984 : 193; Albistur et al. p. 519). Pour plus d'information sur l'histoire de l'Internationale socialiste des femmes, voir [<http://www.socintwomen.org.uk/FRENCH/histoire-sommaire.html>] [5 août 2005].

<sup>21</sup> L'Internationale socialiste des femmes a cessé ses activités au cours de la deuxième guerre mondiale et c'est seulement en 1955 qu'un nouveau Conseil international des femmes sociales-démocrates a été remis sur pied. En 1978, ce groupe a adopté le nom d'Internationale socialiste des Femmes (Ibid.).

## 1.2. Expositions universelles du XIXe siècle – début XXe siècle et traitement de la question des femmes

C'est la nation impériale britannique qui a organisé la première exposition à prétention universelle ou mondiale à Londres en 1851 : la *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations*<sup>22</sup>. L'idée d'organiser une telle exposition universelle est elle-même inspirée par d'autres expositions de plus petites envergures organisées au cours du XVIIIe et au début du XIXe siècle telle que l'exposition industrielle française de 1844 à Paris et au cours de laquelle des « biens coloniaux » sont exposés pour la première fois (Curien, 2003 : 75; Poirier, 1958 : 67)<sup>23</sup>. À la suite de la première exposition universelle, plusieurs autres nations impérialistes, telles que la France, l'empire austro-hongrois, les États-Unis, la Belgique, l'Espagne et l'Italie organisent leurs propres expositions universelles avant 1915<sup>24</sup>. Officiellement, ces expositions ont comme objectif principal d'enseigner le public en faisant ressortir les progrès réalisés et les perspectives d'avenir dans une ou plusieurs branches de l'activité humaine et comme objectifs corollaires de promouvoir les échanges et de contribuer au renforcement de la paix entre les peuples (Galopin, 1997 : 96-97; Curien, 2003 : 75). Dans les faits, on peut analyser ces expositions comme un « outil de culture dont se servent délibérément organisateurs et exposants - les élites des sociétés concernées - qui tentent de transmettre leur vision du monde (Curien, 2003 : p. 76) ». Au nombre de ces visions on compte aussi le militarisme, le colonialisme et l'impérialisme, la suprématie de la race blanche sur les autres, celle des hommes sur les femmes, et celle des classes bourgeoises sur les classes ouvrières.

Selon Karl Marx, la *Great Exhibition* de Londres constitue un emblème du fétichisme capitaliste des marchandises<sup>25</sup>. Cette exposition a aussi servi à populariser des idées utiles à la

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<sup>22</sup> Cette exposition avait pour but d'illustrer le progrès industriel mais dans les faits, elle a plutôt servi à démontrer la supériorité britannique en matière industrielle et à glorifier le libre-échange, la paix, la démocratie et la Constitution britannique (Smith, 1990 : 3; Curien, 2003 : 79).

<sup>23</sup> [<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Great-Exhibition>] [10 juin 2005].

<sup>24</sup> Par exemple, expositions françaises tenues à Paris en 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, 1900; exposition austro-hongroise tenue à Vienne en 1873; expositions américaines tenues à Philadelphie en 1876, à Chicago en 1893 et à St-Louis en 1904; expositions espagnoles à Barcelone en 1888 et 1929; expositions belges tenues à Bruxelles en 1897 et 1910, à Liège en 1905 et à Gand en 1913; exposition italienne tenue à Milan en 1906. L'Australie a également organisé une exposition universelle à Melbourne en 1880. (Données tirées du tableau synthèse de Curien, 2003 p. 345 élaboré à partir des données de Schroeder-Gudehus et Rasmussen, 1992). L'Angleterre a organisé une dernière exposition universelle à Londres en 1862. Cette exposition qui reflète les conflits récents (Guerre de Crimée) et courants (Guerre de sécession américaine) en mettant l'accent sur l'industrie de l'armement sera vertement critiquée et aucune autre exposition universelle n'est tenue par la suite (Curien, 2003, 79 et Prash, 1990, p. 24). Par contre, deux autres expositions internationales et universelles ont été organisées à Glasgow, en Écosse en 1888 et 1901. Pour plus d'information sur les deux expositions de Glasgow (International Exhibition of Industry, Science & Art, Glasgow, 1888 et International Exhibition, Glasgow 1901, voir entre autres : [<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/oct1999.html>] [11 août 2005]; [<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/teach/century/glasgow.html#images>] [11 août 2005].

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. [[www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Great-Exhibition](http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Great-Exhibition)] [10 juin 2005].

mondialisation du capitalisme en tentant d'offrir une vision unifiée du temps et de l'espace mondial, comme l'explique Anne McClintock<sup>26</sup> :

« The Crystal Palace housed the first consumer dreams of a unified world time. As a monument to industrial progress, the Great Exhibition embodied the hope that all the world's cultures could be gathered under one roof – the global progress of history represented as the commodity progress of the Family of Man. At the same time, the Exhibition heralded a new mode of marketing history: the mass consumption of time as a commodity spectacle. Walking about the Exhibition, the spectator (admitted into the museum of modernity through the payment of cash) consumed history as a commodity. The dioramas and panoramas (popular, naturalistic replicas of scenes from empire and natural history) offered the illusion of marshalling all the globe's cultures into a single, visual pedigree of world time.” (1995: p. 57-58).

Au sein de cette exposition, le progrès impérial est offert comme un produit de consommation, sous la forme d'un spectacle national pour les travailleurs britanniques blancs afin qu'ils puissent se sentir inclus dans la nation impériale, le spectacle voyeuriste de leur « supériorité raciale » compensant leur subordination de classe (McClintock, 1995 : 59). Selon Susan Buck-Morss, le message des expositions universelles est la promesse du progrès social sans révolution pour les masses (1990 : 128)<sup>27</sup>. Par exemple, lors de l'exposition universelle tenue à Paris en 1867, des billets gratuits sont offerts à 400 000 travailleurs (Buck-Morss, 1990 : p. 86).

On attribue à l'exposition universelle française de 1867, l'adoption par son commissaire général d'un modèle de classification qui inspirera les expositions suivantes (Curien, 2003 : 80).

« L'exposition de 1867, à Paris, [...] embrasse toute la production humaine à la manière d'une encyclopédie et ordonne l'espace du palais elliptique de telle sorte que la hiérarchie qu'elle induit puisse se « gravir » de l'extérieur du palais vers son centre. Les reconstitutions de toutes sortes frappent les visiteurs (modèle réduit du canal de Suez, cathédrale gothique grandeur nature, temples égyptiens, palais du Bey de Tunis, école rustique américaine); l'opulence montre à tous que l'empire instaure un nouvel âge d'or (Chandler 1990a)<sup>28</sup>. » (Curien, 2003 : 80).

Dans le cas des foires américaines, Rydell note que :

« At a time when the American economy was becoming increasingly consolidated and when the wealth generated by the country's economic expansion was concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, the exposition builders promised that continued growth would

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<sup>26</sup> Cette exposition universelle et son Palais de Cristal représentent l'incarnation même du thème du progrès de la Famille de l'Homme, du temps panoptique ou du temps mondial unifié et de l'espace anachronique (McClintock, 1995 : 56-57). Ces trois éléments sont fondamentaux dans les diverses articulations de l'impérialisme du XIXe siècle et ces éléments réapparaissent régulièrement dans les foires mondiales subséquentes.

<sup>27</sup> Bien que le public des expositions universelles était la classe moyenne qui avait les moyens de défrayer les coûts d'entrée, des efforts importants ont été déployés afin d'encourager la participation des travailleurs à la consommation de masse des marchandises comme spectacle (McClintock, 1995 : 59).

<sup>28</sup> Ironiquement, la Prusse dame le pion à la France avec sa production d'acier et ses énormes canons Krupp qui devaient menacer Paris trois ans plus tard et mener l'empereur à la reddition et à l'exil (Chandler, 1990, cité par Curien, 2004).

result in eventual utopia. Therein lay the mythopoeic grandeur of the fairs: an ideology of economic development, labeled “progress”, was translated into a utopian statement about the future. An ideology, an idea complex tied to socioeconomic cleavages in a particular historical era, was presented as the transcendent answer to the problems besetting America (Rydell, 1984: 4-5). »

Bien que plusieurs expositions fassent participer les masses aux projets impérialistes des nations organisatrices, elles sont aussi des terrains de luttes pour divers mouvements sociaux. En effet, à cette époque, certains mouvements sociaux, dont des mouvements afro-américains aux États-Unis, des mouvements de femmes et des mouvements ouvriers<sup>29</sup> autant en Europe qu'en Amérique du Nord, tentent de prendre avantage de l'organisation de ces événements internationaux afin de contester l'absence du traitement de leur cause par les organisateurs des expositions universelles ou d'assurer l'organisation de leurs propres activités de représentation. Par exemple, en 1867, en parallèle de l'exposition universelle tenue à Paris, le BFASS en profite pour organiser une convention mondiale anti-esclavagiste à Paris<sup>30</sup>. Les femmes et les hommes afro-américains récemment affranchis de l'esclavage manifestent également contre leur exclusion lors des diverses foires tenues en territoire américain<sup>31</sup>. Et comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, des mouvements de femmes organisent des congrès internationaux sur les droits des femmes en parallèle des expositions universelles de Paris en 1878 et 1889, ou des femmes manifestent en faveur de leurs droits politiques, comme dans le cas de l'exposition américaine de Philadelphie en 1876.

C'est aussi en partie grâce à l'existence des mouvements de femmes que des bâtiments « de la femme » sont érigés lors de la majorité (60%) des expositions universelles entre 1873 et 1915 (Pepchinski, 2000 : 1). En effet, dès 1873, lors de l'exposition universelle de Vienne, un premier pavillon séparé de l'édifice principal est dédié aux travaux féminins<sup>32</sup>. Par la suite, une section (Glasgow 1888, 1901), un bâtiment (Chicago 1893; San Francisco, 1915<sup>33</sup>), un pavillon

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<sup>29</sup> Pierre-Gerlier Forest et Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus (1991) notent que : « [...] L'internationalisation ne se limitait pas au domaine économique. Les tendances associatives se manifestaient dans toutes les sphères d'activité : scientifiques et intellectuelles, artistiques, sociales et professionnelles. Certains historiens du mouvement socialiste font même remonter la création de la Première Internationale - celle de Marx et Engels - à la visite d'une délégation ouvrière française à la seconde exposition de Londres, en 1862. Les expositions universelles ne sont donc que le signe d'un mouvement plus vaste, l'expression spectaculaire de l'euphorie internationaliste qui traversait toute l'époque. La multiplication et, parfois, la concentration extraordinaire de congrès internationaux participaient du même esprit. » (p. 207).

<sup>30</sup> En 1855, alors qu'une première exposition universelle a lieu à Paris, le BFASS a plutôt organisé une autre convention mondiale anti-esclavagiste à Londres (Anti-Slavery International, n.d.).

<sup>31</sup> Pour un excellent compte rendu de ces manifestations diverses, voir Rydell, 1984.

<sup>32</sup> Le pavillon des travaux féminins de Vienne en 1873 a été organisé par des hommes, mais des femmes actives au sein de l'Association viennoise des femmes professionnelles ont apporté une certaine contribution (Pepchinski, 2000 : 4).

<sup>33</sup> Dans le cadre de l'exposition internationale Panama Pacifique de San Francisco en 1915, la Young Women's Christian Association a fait construire un pavillon pour les femmes qui n'a pas servi de lieu d'exposition mais plutôt de lieu de repos pour les femmes et de restauration mixte. Selon Pepchinski, ceci illustre un changement important dans la culture américaine où il n'est plus nécessaire d'offrir des représentations didactiques de l'idéal de la féminité bourgeoise, car la présence des femmes dans la

(Philadelphie, 1876) ou même un palais (Paris 1900; Liège, 1905; Bruxelles, 1910<sup>34</sup>) sont consacrés à « la » femme dans le cadre des expositions universelles<sup>35</sup>.

Selon Mary Pepchinski, la présence des bâtiments de la femme aux expositions universelles rend visible la demande des mouvements des femmes européens et américains pour que les femmes occupent un rôle plus actifs dans la sphère publique (2000 : 1). Par contre, ces pavillons sont aussi le fruit d'une autre tendance contradictoire, soit l'association d'activités ou de fonctions économiques spécifiques avec la féminité bourgeoise dans le cadre du développement des États nations au cours de la deuxième moitié du XIXe siècle. Ainsi, les pavillons de la femme jouent plus souvent un rôle didactique qui renforcent les rôles traditionnels féminins et l'idéal bourgeois de la féminité et qui situent la différence sexuelle en relation au système économique capitaliste en émergence (Pepchinski, *ibid*)<sup>36</sup>. Selon Pepchinski, les femmes ont pu participer dans les sphères publiques éphémères des expositions universelles en autant que leur présence ne perturbe pas le grand récit de ces événements (2000 : 28). Selon elle, les pavillons de la femme n'ont jamais provoqué de malaise ou mis au défi le statu quo. Ils n'ont pas stimulé les femmes afin qu'elles repensent la féminité sur un mode nouveau et radical. Ces bâtiments n'ont pas été pensés de manière à être inclusifs : la féminité y est représentée comme une qualité sélective et élitiste. Dans le cas des pavillons américains, cette sélectivité est notable quant à l'exclusion des Autochtones, des Afro-américaines et des immigrantes récemment arrivées, alors que dans le cas des pavillons européens, ce sont les femmes de classe ouvrière et les indigènes des colonies qui sont exclues (Pepchinski, 2000 : 29). De plus, les positions et les militantes féministes les plus radicales sont souvent écartées des manifestations officielles des expositions. Par exemple, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, l'exposition sur les luttes des suffragettes offerte par la National Women's Suffrage Association n'est pas présentée dans le Pavillon de la femme lors de la Centennial Exposition de Philadelphie en 1876 (Cordato, 1989 : 56). Ou encore, lors du congrès international sur les droits des femmes de Paris en 1878, Hubertine Auclert ne peut défendre la cause du suffrage féminin.

Les femmes bourgeoises qui organisent la présence des femmes aux expositions universelles par la construction de bâtiment sur la femme ou la tenue de congrès internationaux sur les femmes, ne contribuent pas seulement à reproduire l'idéal bourgeois de la féminité, mais elles ont également participé à l'entreprise impérialiste et colonialiste des expositions universelles. Dans la section suivante, afin de mettre en relief ces propos, nous présentons une analyse plus détaillée de l'exposition universelle colombienne organisée à Chicago en 1893. Le cas de l'exposition de 1893 offre un matériel riche pour analyser les intersections de divers rapports de

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sphère publique est désormais acceptée et que les femmes ont plutôt besoin de logements afin de participer à cette vie publique (Pepchinski, 2000 : 26).

<sup>34</sup> À Liège, le palais de la femme est situé dans le parc d'Acclimatation près des pavillons des colonies africaines et asiatiques. À Bruxelles, il s'agit d'un palais des travaux féminins (Pepchinski, 2000 : 24-25).

<sup>35</sup> Après 1915 et avant la seconde Guerre mondiale, d'autres expositions universelles ont alloué un espace séparé pour les femmes. Par exemple, lors de l'exposition universelle de Paris en 1937, deux pavillons ont traité des femmes : un pavillon de la femme, de l'enfant et de la famille et un pavillon du féminisme. Par contre, le pavillon du féminisme a été relégué au parc des attractions (Curien 2003 : 26; Namer, 1981 : 51).

<sup>36</sup> Pepchinski note que les produits manufacturés pour les femmes ont été exposés dans l'ensemble des expositions et n'étaient pas confinés au seul pavillon de la femme (p. 2).

pouvoir et les luttes menées par divers mouvements sociaux dans le cadre de la mondialisation capitaliste.

### 1.2.1. *Place des femmes et de la diversité au sein de l'exposition universelle colombienne de Chicago, 1893*

En 1893, le gouvernement américain, en pleine expansion impérialiste<sup>37</sup>, a organisé une exposition universelle visant à souligner les 400 ans de l'arrivée de Christophe Colomb en Amérique<sup>38</sup>. La *World's Columbian Exposition* a lieu à Chicago du 5 mai au 31 octobre 1893. Elle est composée de deux éléments : une Ville Blanche (*White City*) comportant de multiples bâtiments de facture néoclassique dont un bâtiment de la femme, et un parc d'attractions, le *Midway plaisance* placé sous les auspices du département d'ethnologie<sup>39</sup>. En plus des expositions dans la Ville Blanche et le Midway Plaisance, une section complémentaire est ajoutée afin que des congrès mondiaux soient organisés au cours de l'exposition universelle. Le comité responsable de ces congrès est connu comme le *World's Congress Auxiliary*. Le *Woman's Branch* de ce comité organise le premier congrès dans cette section, le *World's Congress of Representative Women* dont il a été question plus haut. Selon "*The Book of the Fair*", les objectifs du *World's Congress Auxiliary* sont les suivants :

Its purpose was to hold, during the term of the Fair, a series of conventions attended by the foremost men and women in every department of progress. As a supplement to the material display it was intended, as stated in the preliminary announcement, that "The wonderful achievements of the new age, in science, literature, education, government, jurisprudence, morals, charity, religion, and other departments of human activity, should also be conspicuously displayed as the most effective means of increasing the fraternity, progress, prosperity, and peace of mankind," In a word, it was proposed to lay before the world the most important results attained in the several departments of civilized life, voiced by the ablest living representatives whose attendance could be procured. (Bancroft, 1893 : 73)

L'idée qui guide l'ensemble de l'exposition est le progrès et l'innovation technologique dans le Nouveau monde. Le responsable Smithsonian de la classification des oeuvres et objets, G. Brown Goode, définit les objectifs de l'exposition dans les mêmes termes que ceux employés pour décrire l'exposition universelle de 1867. En effet, selon lui, l'exposition : « illustrates the steps of progress of civilization and its arts in successive centuries, and in all lands up to the present time. [It will become] an illustrated encyclopaedia of civilization (cité dans Rydell, 1984: 45) ». En fait, l'exposition colombienne a joué un rôle crucial dans la popularisation aux États-Unis des idées scientifiques racistes et sexistes sur l'évolution des races (Rydell, 1984 : 40-41). En effet, des « représentants » des peuples autochtones, africains, du Moyen-orient et d'Asie provenant des colonies des nations impérialistes sont exposés comme des bêtes de cirque dans le Midway Plaisance selon un ordre d'exposition décroissant du plus « civilisé » au plus

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<sup>37</sup> Les États-Unis ont mené des campagnes impérialistes autant vers l'Amérique latine que le Pacifique. Par exemple, du côté du Pacifique, la reine d'Hawaii a soumis sa reddition aux États-Unis en 1893.

<sup>38</sup> En 1892, l'Espagne a également commémoré la « découverte » de l'Amérique par Christophe Colomb avec une exposition historique colombienne (Rydell, 1984: 43).

<sup>39</sup> Au sein du Midway Plaisance, des habitants des colonies ou les indiens des Amériques sont exposés dans un état naturel reconstitué et dans un « ordre descendant de barbarie » (Bederman, 1995 : 34).



« barbare » suivant une classification imaginée par les anthropologues blancs imbus des valeurs racistes, sexistes et orientalistes de l'époque (Rydell, 1984 : 65)<sup>40</sup>. De plus, en divers endroits dans la Ville Blanche dont dans le bâtiment de la femme, des expositions sous le contrôle des mêmes anthropologues présentent des artefacts autochtones, asiatiques ou africains. Même des enfants des peuples autochtones sont « exposés » dans un bâtiment reproduisant un pensionnat sous l'autorité du bureau des affaires indiennes du gouvernement fédéral<sup>41</sup>.

Bien que les femmes blanches américaines n'aient pas le droit de vote à cette époque<sup>42</sup>, le gouvernement américain leur accorde une représentation au sein de l'exposition<sup>43</sup>. Un comité de dames gestionnaires (*Board of Lady Managers*) composé exclusivement de femmes blanches bourgeoises veille à la construction du bâtiment de la femme et du bâtiment de l'enfance au sein de la ville Blanche. Par contre, d'autres femmes blanches s'opposent à la construction d'un bâtiment séparé sur la femme. Elles souhaitent plutôt que leurs réalisations soient traitées sur un pied d'égalité avec les hommes blancs. Par contre, le Board of Lady Managers sent le besoin d'ériger un bâtiment de la femme et un pavillon pour les enfants avec une kindergarden idéale et il mobilise les ressources nécessaires afin d'y parvenir. Le bâtiment de la femme, dessiné par l'architecte, Sophia Hayden, 23 ans, assure plusieurs fonctions. Il sert de lieu d'exposition de diverses contributions des femmes à la « civilisation ». Ainsi, il remplit une fonction didactique

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<sup>40</sup> Comme le rapporte "The Book of the Fair": « All the continents are here represented, and many nations of each continent, civilized, semi-civilized, and barbarous, from the Caucasian to the African black [...] (Bancroft, 1893: 836)." Ou encore, "The *Chicago Tribune* reported that the proximity of Turkish and Chinese to Native American and Dahomean villages afforded fair goers the opportunity to "descend the spiral of evolution, tracing humanity in its highest phases down almost to its animalistic origins" (qtd. in Rydell 62)" (Allison Berg : 2002, chap. 1).

<sup>41</sup> "By the bureau of Indian affairs, as a branch of the Interior department, a building was erected near the Krupp pavilion and the convent of La Rabida, reproducing, as far as possible, the reservation boarding-school, the walls of its chambers decorated with articles of Indian manufacture, and the windows partly composed of transparencies depicting Indian customs and modes of life, with collections of photographs for similar purposes and portraits of prominent chieftains. There are workshops, school, sitting and dining rooms, dormitories, and kitchen, with apartments for employees, and here may be seen, under charge of instructors, boys and girls, studying or reciting, working at trades, or preparing their meals, all as though actually living on reservations, with specimens of their self-taught industries compared with those of civilized nations, and with the methods adopted and the results accomplished. The pupils and teachers were selected from a large number of Indian schools, not only government schools, but such as are conducted by the several religious denominations, each furnishing its quota, and giving place to others after a brief sojourn. Thus are extended to a large number of Indian boys and girls the educational advantages of the Fair, and to visitors a complete exposition of the training afforded by government and other agencies at widely scattered points." (Bancroft, 1893: 122).

<sup>42</sup> Les femmes américaines ont eu le droit de vote au fédéral en 1920 avec l'adoption du 19<sup>e</sup> amendement à la Constitution américaine. Malgré leur affranchissement de l'esclavage en 1863, les hommes afro-américains ont obtenu le droit de vote seulement après la guerre civile et après l'adoption du 14<sup>e</sup> amendement à la Constitution en 1868 (Clinton et Lunardi, 1999 : 64).

<sup>43</sup> Cette concession est sûrement le fruit des mobilisations des groupes de femmes entamées dès 1889. À cette époque, près d'une centaine de femmes ont signé une pétition, soumise au congrès par la suffragette Susan B. Anthony, afin que des femmes soient nommées à la commission nationale de l'exposition (Bederman, 1995 : 33 ; Weiman, 1981 : 31).

d'exposition d'oeuvres d'art féminines et d'artefacts produits par des femmes au fil des siècles<sup>44</sup>. Il abrite également une bibliothèque réunissant de nombreux ouvrages rédigés par des femmes et un restaurant. Des espaces sont alloués à une soixantaine d'organisations féminines au sein de l'Organization Room<sup>45</sup> (Howe Elliot, 1893, p. 156).

L'emplacement même du bâtiment de la femme sur le site de la Ville blanche, laisse entrevoir comment les femmes sont perçues comme étant marginales à la civilisation blanche (Bederman, 1995 : 34). En effet, rien n'est laissé au hasard dans l'organisation du plan du site et le Bâtiment de la femme est situé à la limite de la Ville blanche, face à la seule sortie menant au Midway Plaisance (Bederman, 1995 : 34)<sup>46</sup>. Par contre, d'autres auteurs ont plutôt présenté le Bâtiment de la femme, le premier pavillon à être aperçu en sortant du Midway plaisance vers la Ville Blanche, comme un symbole de paix et de lumière en contraste avec le chaos et la noirceur du Midway Plaisance<sup>47</sup>. Dans une certaine mesure, ces propos font échos aux théories du socialiste utopiste Charles Fourier selon qui le degré d'avancement d'une civilisation se mesure au traitement qu'elle réserve aux femmes (Farnsworth, 1978 : 184).

Bederman souligne que la séparation des expositions sur les oeuvres féminines ont pour effet de suggérer que les contributions des femmes étaient complètement différentes de celles des hommes. Un journaliste du *New York Times* a présenté cet effet en ces termes :

« The atmosphere of the entire building is not [...] woman's right to invade the domain of man, but the sublimely soft and soothing atmosphere of womanliness [...] the achievements of man [are] in iron, steel, wood, and the baser and cruder products [while] in the Woman's Building one can note the distinct demarcation in the female successes in the more delicate and finer products of the loom, the needle, the brush, and more refined avenues of effort which culminate in the home, the hospital, the church, and in personal adornment" (Cité dans Bederman, 1995: 34).

Ces remarques n'ont rien d'étonnant si l'on considère qu'une salle d'hôpital, avec des infirmières montrant leur savoir faire, ainsi qu'une cuisine idéale, avec des dames montrant leur savoir culinaire, sont reproduites dans le Bâtiment de la femme.

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<sup>44</sup> Des expositions ethnologiques sur les femmes ont aussi été exposées dans d'autres pavillons centraux. Par exemple, une exposition sur l'implication des femmes pour la paix a été présentée dans le pavillon fédéral (Bancroft, 1893).

<sup>45</sup> Dans l'Organization Room du Bâtiment de la femme, toutes les organisations proviennent des États-Unis, sauf une association française. Les organisations britanniques se sont plutôt regroupées dans la section réservée à la Grande-Bretagne au sein du pavillon de la femme (Weimann, 1981 ; 516).

<sup>46</sup> « Thus, while the Lady Managers "worked tirelessly to prove that women and men had contributed equally to the advancement of civilization," the Woman's Building "underlined white women's marginality to civilization," not least because it was positioned directly opposite the midway, the "uncivilized" section of the fair where Asian, Native American, and African displays were laid out in descending order of "barbarism" (Bederman, 1995: 34).

<sup>47</sup> « In the Midway it's some dirty and all barbaric. [...] and when you come out of that mile-long babel, where you've been elbowed and cheated, you pass under a bridge - and all of a sudden you are in a great, beautiful silence. The angels of the Woman's Buildin' smile down and bless you, and you know that in what seemed like one step, you've passed out o' darkness and into the light. » (Tiré du roman "Sweet Clover" de Clara Louisa Burnham (Chicago: Laird et Lee, 1893, cité par Rydell, 1984, p. 67).

Le Bâtiment de la femme ne sert pas seulement à produire et reproduire des idéaux de la féminité bourgeoise, il est également utile à la reproduction de savoirs racistes et à la popularisation du racisme scientifique. Par exemple, l'Institut Smithsonian a préparé une exposition intitulée « le travail des femmes dans la sauvagerie » présentant une collection impressionnante de paniers, tissages, et autres formes d'art produit par des femmes autochtones, africaines et polynésiennes (Bederman, 1995 : 37-38). Cette collection ethnologique exposée dans le bâtiment de la femme est présentée comme un supplément aux collections des pavillons principaux. La logique d'exposition adoptée dans le bâtiment de la femme est d'ailleurs la même que celle adoptée ailleurs puisque l'Institut Smithsonian en a la charge. L'objectif de l'exposition ethnologique dans le bâtiment de la femme est de retracer les pas de la femme des temps préhistoriques jusqu'au présent :

Their intimate connection shown with all that has tended to promote the development of the race, even though they have worked under the most disadvantageous conditions. [...] Especial attention will be called to these early inventions of women by means of an ethnological display in the woman's building, which will supplement the race exhibit made in the department of Ethnology (Farmer, 1893: 493).

Selon Bederman, les contributions de ces femmes « primitives » sont acceptables pour le Board of Lady Managers seulement parce qu'elles semblent « historiques » - en effet, les objets produits par les femmes autochtones, africaines et polynésiennes sont décrits comme des représentations du travail des ancêtres des femmes blanches, et non comme des représentations du travail de femmes non-blanches contemporaines. La construction des femmes non-blanches comme des représentations d'un passé distant empêche les femmes blanches d'accepter ces femmes comme des consoeurs ou des concitoyennes dans le présent (Bederman, 1995 : 38)<sup>48</sup>. Ce qui explique en partie l'exclusion des femmes autochtones et afro-américaines du Board of Lady Managers. Une seule Afro-américaine, Fanny Barrier Williams, est brièvement employée pour un maigre salaire par ce comité (Weiman, 1981 : 121).

Les stéréotypes racistes de l'époque sont également reproduits dans l'iconographie du Bâtiment de la femme. En effet, dans la salle principale d'exposition éclairée par un puit de lumière central, deux peintures murales commandées par la présidente du Board of Lady Managers, Bertha Palmer, sont placées aux deux extrémités du bâtiment de manière à se faire face<sup>49</sup> : sur le tympan sud, la murale intitulée « la femme primitive », et sur le tympan nord, la murale intitulée « la femme moderne »<sup>50</sup>. La disposition géographique n'est pas sans rappeler la division entre les hémisphères Nord et Sud : Au Nord, les pays américains et européens ou « le monde civilisé » ; au Sud, les colonies et autres pays jugés « primitifs », c'est-à-dire « non civilisés » selon

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<sup>48</sup> Des exemples de cette approche peuvent également être retracés dans l'organisation du World's Congress of Representative Women, comme nous le verrons plus loin.

<sup>49</sup> Une pratique similaire a été adoptée dans le bâtiment du gouvernement fédéral où : « Over the northern entrance are depicted the triumphs of liberty; over the southern, the home of cave-dwellers; » (Bancroft, 1893 : 134).

<sup>50</sup> Murale « Primitive woman » de Mary Macmonnies-Low. Pour une illustration de cette murale, voir: [<http://members.cox.net/academia/cassatt5.html#macmonnies>] [30 mars 2005]. Murale « Modern Woman » de Mary Cassatt. Pour une illustration de cette murale, voir: [<http://members.cox.net/academia/cassatt.html>] [7 juin 2005]. Voir les images en annexe.

la terminologie du XIXe siècle<sup>51</sup>. Cette idéologie perdure aujourd'hui dans les représentations Nord-Sud et les discours sur le développement international. Lorsque Bertha Palmer précise ses exigences pour les murales, elle indique :

Of course, we should want something symbolic showing the advancement of woman. My idea was that perhaps we might show woman in her primitive condition as a bearer of burdens and doing drudgery, either an Indian scene or a classic one in the manner of Puvis and as a contrast, woman in the position she occupies today, but I should be quite willing for the artist to propose her own subjects and submit the sketches for our decision (Lettre de Palmer à Hallowell, 24 février 1892, citée par Weimann, 1981: 191).

L'artiste chargée de la murale sur la femme primitive, Mary Macmonnies-Low élève de Puvis de Chavannes, a opté pour une scène classique pour les raisons suivantes :

« I began immediately to study the composition, rejecting [...] the idea of the savage, the prehistoric, the slave, the Oriental woman, or any that would require precision as to detail of costume, race or environment as being unfit to express an abstract and universal idea. I finally settled on the simplest type or costume, in a landscape background that might be of any time or country and is certainly not America [...]. The women indicate with the completest [*sic*] possible simplicity the bearer of burdens, the toilers of the earth, the servants of man, and more than this, being without ambition, contented with their lot" (Weimann, 1981: 206-207).

Les propos de McMonnies illustrent bien les stéréotypes racistes de l'époque dont plusieurs perdurent encore de nos jours. Selon ces stéréotypes, le choix de modèles de femmes blanches s'impose comme représentant mieux un idéal universel que des femmes situées dans des contextes historiques précis.

En contraste avec les quelques privilèges accordés aux femmes blanches bourgeoises, les peuples afro-américains et autochtones n'obtiennent pas le droit de se représenter eux-mêmes au sein de l'exposition colombienne<sup>52</sup>. Par contre, des femmes et des hommes afro-américains

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<sup>51</sup> Ces murales et leurs dispositions au sein du Bâtiment de la femme me font également penser au concept de « temps panoptique » d'Anne McClintock (1995 : 37), où dans un seul lieu, à l'aide de deux images contrastées, l'« évolution » de l'humanité est saisie comme d'un seul coup d'œil. Anne McClintock précise : « By panoptical time, I mean the image of global history consumed - at a glance - in a single spectacle from a point of privileged invisibility. In the seventeenth century, Bossuet, in *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, argued that any attempt to produce a universal history depended on being able to figure "the order of times" ("comme d'un seul coup d'oeil") at a glance. To meet the "scientific" standards set by the natural historians and empiricists of the eighteenth century, a visual paradigm was needed to display evolutionary progress as a measurable spectacle. The exemplary figure that emerged was the evolutionary family Tree of Man" (p. 37). McClintock note que cet arbre généalogique représente le temps de l'évolution comme un temps sans femme. Elle souligne, « From the outset, the idea of racial progress was gendered but in such a way as to render women invisible as historical agents (p. 39) ». Dans le bâtiment de la femme de l'Exposition colombienne de 1893, les murales de la femme primitive et de la femme moderne, renverse cette absence en ne représentant que des femmes.

<sup>52</sup> À cette époque les Autochtones ne sont pas considérés comme des citoyens américains, par contre, les Afro-américains sont affranchis de l'esclavage depuis une trentaine d'années et les hommes noirs ont obtenu le droit de vote en 1868.

contestent leur exclusion des comités de direction de l'exposition<sup>53</sup>. Des Afro-américaines tentent en vain de faire nommer au moins une femme noire au Board of Lady Managers. Au cours de l'exposition, les militantes afro-américaines Ida B. Wells, Irvine Garland Penn, et Ferdinand L. Barnett, et le militant afro-américain Frederick Douglass distribuent une dizaine de milliers d'exemplaires de leur brochure intitulée : *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition* (Rydell, 1999). Elles et ils dénoncent également le racisme sous-jacent à l'exposition du village des Dahomeys dans le Midway Plaisance qui présente les Africains noirs comme des représentants des « races les plus inférieures » (Ballard, 2002 : 114). Prenant comme base le bâtiment d'Haïti<sup>54</sup> dans la Ville blanche, les Afro-américains s'assurent que leur exclusion officielle ne passe pas sous silence. Grâce à leurs manifestations régulières, elles et ils obtiennent du comité de direction de l'exposition qu'une journée leur soit dédiée, le 25 août (Ballard, 2002 : 119 ; Rydell, 1984 : 53). Quelques congrès organisés par le World's Congress Auxiliary accordent une prise de parole à des personnes afro-américaines : notamment le congrès sur l'Afrique, sur le travail et sur les femmes. Par contre, comme le souligne Ballard, lors de ces congrès, « blacks were not on their own ground. From time to time, [...] they had to contend with ex-Confederates and imperialists, some of whom praised slavery for 'civilizing' blacks and colonization for uplifting Africa (Ballard, 2002: 115) ». On retrouve ici un bon exemple de discours sur l'impérialisme comme mission civilisatrice.

Pour leur part, les organisatrices du *World Congress of Representative Women* invitent une diversité de femmes à prendre la parole lors de ce congrès. Ces femmes sont présentées comme des représentantes de groupes de femmes ou de leur gouvernement national. Au cours du congrès, une place prépondérante est faite aux organisations de femmes. La présidente du Board of Lady Managers et du Woman's Branch, Bertha Palmer, insiste longuement sur le nombre de groupes de femmes présents au congrès (Sewall, 1894 : 5). Puis, May Wright Sewall, présidente du National Council of Women, est la première à présenter sa communication intitulée : « The Economy of Woman's Forces Through Organization ». Dans cette communication, Sewall insiste sur le pouvoir des organisations et sur leur modernité (Sewall, 1894 : 37).

La majorité des conférencières ont été des Américaines blanches bourgeoises, à l'exception d'une femme amérindienne, de six Afro-américaines<sup>55</sup> et d'un Afro-Américain<sup>56</sup>. De plus, des femmes provenant de quinze pays différents<sup>57</sup> ont présenté des communications dans le cadre de la session multinationale intitulée : « Solidarité des intérêts de l'humanité ». De plus, à la suite des

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<sup>53</sup> Selon Rydell, c'est en partie grâce aux protestations qui ont suivi cette exclusion que Hale G. Parker, un Afro-américain, directeur d'école à Saint-Louis, a été nommé à la Commission nationale en tant que remplaçant (Rydell, 1984 : 52).

<sup>54</sup> Les esclaves noirs se sont affranchis de leurs maîtres français et ont obtenu l'indépendance d'Haïti en 1804 (Ballard, 2002 : 118).

<sup>55</sup> Dont Fannie Barrier Williams et Sarah J. Early (Sewall, 1894 : p. xiii).

<sup>56</sup> À cette occasion, même Frederick Douglass, en raison de la demande populaire à la suite des présentations de ses consœurs afro-américaines, a pris la parole malgré les strictes règles du World's Congress Auxiliary à l'effet qu'aucune personne autre que celles invitées à le faire pouvait prendre la parole lors des Congrès (Sewall, 1894 : p 717).

<sup>57</sup> En plus de la France, du Royaume-Uni, de la Suisse, des représentantes de l'Espagne, du Brésil, d'Amérique du Sud, du Canada, de la Pologne, de l'Islande, de la Syrie et du Siam ont pris la parole. La plupart de ces représentantes sont venues aux frais du National Council of Women des États-Unis.

allocutions d'ouverture de Bertha Palmer, d'Ellen Henrotin (vice-présidente du Woman's Branch) et de May Wright Sewall, les femmes provenant de pays étrangers peuvent répondre et adresser leurs remerciements aux organisatrices du congrès. Bertha Palmer traite brièvement de la pauvreté des femmes, en dénonçant le fait que cette pauvreté persiste malgré le développement du capitalisme. Elle souligne l'importance pour les femmes de parler pour elles-mêmes de leurs besoins. Par contre, les femmes de classe ouvrière, immigrantes, autochtones, ou afro-américaines ne peuvent participer au comité organisateur du Congrès. Cela a pour résultat qu'elles ne peuvent parler pour elles-mêmes dans des conditions qui leur conviennent. Dans son allocution d'ouverture, May Wright Sewall se targue du fait qu'une Autochtone et des Afro-américaines ont accepté de participer à son congrès en insistant sur leur capacité de pardon (Sewall, 1894 : 16)<sup>58</sup>. Selon Berg, cette formulation est en fait une réprimande aux Afro-américaines qui ont osé critiquer les organisatrices du Congrès en les invitant à pardonner mais surtout, à oublier (Berg, 2002 : 7). D'ailleurs, l'ordre des présentations en dit long sur la place qu'occupent les Afro-américaines aux yeux des organisatrices du congrès. En effet, cinq des six présentations des Afro-américaines sont faites dans la section traitant des femmes étrangères (le symposium intitulé : The Solidarity of Human Interests). Selon Berg, ces Afro-américaines ont pu être considérées comme représentantes seulement dans la mesure où elles sont représentées comme des étrangères à l'intérieur de la nation américaine (Berg, 2002 : chap. 1).

La seule Autochtone qui soit invitée à prendre la parole lors du Congrès est présentée comme étant la descendante du dernier chef héréditaire des Cherokees<sup>59</sup>. Une représentante de la *Women's National Indian Association*<sup>60</sup> qui prend la parole lors du Congrès dans la section traitant du gouvernement américain, mais il s'avère que ce groupe a été fondée par des bourgeoises blanches. De plus, bien que cette communication insiste sur l'importance d'améliorer le traitement réservé aux peuples autochtones, elle reprend à son compte les thèses racistes et évolutionnistes selon lesquelles, de toutes les façons, les peuples autochtones en Amérique sont en voie « d'extinction ».

Une seule représentante provenant d'un pays du Moyen-Orient – Madame Korany de Syrie – est invitée à prendre la parole lors du Congrès. Les seules autres représentations dominantes et orientalistes du Moyen-Orient sont confinées au Midway Plaisance, dans le théâtre de la Petite Égypte où des danseuses du ventre « exotiques » attirent l'attention des visiteurs (Bordelon,

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<sup>58</sup> « Glad as we are to unite in this Congress mistresses of the different arts, we feel it a gladder if humbler duty to unite in it the races that are at work together within our land for liberty. It is a wonderful truth that the capability for forgiveness, that divinest of attributes, is a human inheritance. You will find upon the list of our speakers a descendant of the last hereditary chief of the Cherokees, and also some descendants of that other more greatly outraged race, imported only to be reduced to servitude, who come to us but one remove from the generation of their own blood which was sold from the block. Is not this proof of the capacity of forgiveness possessed by these two races?» (Sewall, 1894: 16). Selon Berg, par ces propos, Sewall répond en fait aux insatisfactions des femmes noires face aux organisatrices du congrès en leur servant une admonition afin de pardonner et d'oublier (Berg, 2002, chap. 1 : 7).

<sup>59</sup>. Par contre, comme cette représentante autochtone n'est pas nommée, il nous a été impossible de distinguer sa communication dans l'ensemble des actes du Congrès.

<sup>60</sup>. La *Woman's National Indian Association* a été mise sur pied en 1881 par Amelia S. Quinton, une bourgeoise blanche américaine dans le but d'éclairer les « barbarous tribes of the West » (Weimann, 1981 : 500 ; voir aussi : <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/eagle/congress/quinton.html>).

2004). Ou encore dans le « World's Congress of Beauties from 40 Nations » aussi présenté dans le Midway Plaisance. Parmi ces 40 beautés dont 25 d'Europe, nous trouvons une sultane accompagnée de ces servantes, une star de l'Est, et une femme d'Orient (Bancroft, 1893)<sup>61</sup>.

Dans le cadre de la section internationale du Congrès des femmes représentantes, c'est Isabelle Bogelot, trésorière de l'ICW depuis 1888 et représentante de la France au Congrès qui prononce l'allocution d'ouverture de la session intitulée « Solidarité des intérêts de l'humanité ». À cette occasion, elle a tenu les propos suivants :

The solidarity of human interests does not admit of a doubt. [...] A this time, when steam and electricity have eliminated distances, nothing can happen among one people that does not have its echo among all the others. An injustice can not occur in any corner whatsoever of the civilized world which will not soon have to be suffered elsewhere. A lovely deed, a just idea, can not be enjoyed in one country whose good effects are not also felt by others. [...] So we are all one, without distinction of nationality, when it is a matter of humanity. (Sewall 1894 : 635).

La similarité des propos de Bogelot et des tenants contemporains de la mondialisation quant à la compression du temps et de l'espace grâce aux avancées technologiques est frappante. Par contre, ce qui retient notre attention ici, c'est la définition de l'humanité à laquelle Bogelot fait référence. Nous sommes « tous un », lorsqu'il est question d'humanité dit-elle, ne reconnaissant aucune diversité. De plus, quelques lignes plus haut, elle indique bien clairement que le monde auquel elle se réfère est le monde civilisé. Il importe de rappeler qu'à cette époque, le concept de civilisation avait une connotation explicitement raciale (Bederman, 1995 : 25) : le monde civilisé étant celui des bourgeois blancs versus les autres classes sociales et les autres groupes racialisés<sup>62</sup>.

Dans son discours, Bogelot ne dénonce pas explicitement le racisme à l'oeuvre dans les sociétés occidentales et reproduites dans les rencontres sur les femmes représentantes. Comme bell hooks (1981) le souligne, les seules personnes à dénoncer clairement cette situation et à démontrer l'articulation entre le racisme et le sexisme sont les représentantes afro-américaines. Fannie Barrier Williams, militante afro-américaine pour les droits de toutes les femmes, dans son allocution « The Intellectual Progress of the Colored Women of the United States since the Emancipation Proclamation » fait clairement référence à la race et au sexe :

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<sup>61</sup> Des photos de ces femmes sont reproduites dans « the book of the fair » (Bancroft, 1893) disponible sur Internet : <http://columbus.gl.iit.edu/bookfair/1500/00134042.jpg> [5 octobre 2005].

<sup>62</sup> Selon Bederman, à cette époque, ce concept signifiait plus que « l'Ouest » ou les sociétés industriellement avancées. « Civilization denoted a precise stage in human racial evolution – the one following the more primitive stages of « savagery and barbarism. Human races were assumed to evolve from simple savagery, through violent barbarism, to advanced and valuable civilization. But only white races had, as yet, evolved to the civilized stage. In fact, people sometimes spoke of civilization as if it were itself a racial trait, inherited by all Anglo-Saxons and other “advances” white races” (Bederman, 1995: 25).

If the love of humanity more than the love of races and sex shall pulsate throughout all the grand results that shall issue to the world from this parliament of women, women of African descent in the United States will for the first time begin to feel the sweet release from the blighting thrall of prejudice. The colored women as well as all women, will realize that the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is a maxim that will become more blessed in its significance when the hand of woman shall take it from its sepulture in books and make it the gospel of every-day life and the unerring guide in the relations of all men, women and children (Sewall, 1894: p. 711).

À la suite des propos tenus par ces consœurs afro-américaines, Frederick Douglass, ancien esclave et militant afro-américain anti-esclavagiste et pour le suffrage universel, a été invité à prendre la parole de manière impromptue dans le cadre du congrès. Sa déclaration a aussi clairement traité des discriminations sur la base de la couleur de la peau et du sexe. Il a déclaré avec enthousiasme : « A new heaven is dawning upon us, and a new earth is ours, in which all discriminations against men and women on account of color and sex is passing away, and will pass away [...]. ( Sewall, 1894, p. 717) ». Fannie Barrier Williams, et Frederick Douglass, soulignent ainsi comment la discrimination en fonction de la couleur de la peau et du sexe ne peut être combattue sur terre que grâce à la solidarité entre les hommes et les femmes de toutes les « couleurs » ou « race » unis dans une humanité diversifiée. Ainsi, bien que l'organisation du World Congress of Representative Women a reproduit plusieurs des stéréotypes racistes, sexistes, et impérialistes de l'époque, il a tout de même été un lieu où des discours contre hégémoniques ont pu être exprimés sur les droits des femmes et contre le racisme.



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## Annexe 1 : Reproduction des murales des tympans nord et sud du Bâtiment de la femme

### 1. Au nord : La femme moderne

Murale « Modern Woman » de Mary Cassatt située Au nord du Bâtiment de la femme, Exposition colombienne mondiale de Chicago 1893.



### 2. Au sud : La femme primitive



Murale « *Primitive Woman* » par Mary Macmonnies-Low. Image tirée de <http://members.cox.net/academia/cassatt5.html#macmonnies>. et Howe Elliot, Maud (ed.). 1893. *Art and handicraft in the Woman's Building of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893* / edited by Maud Howe Elliott; with special articles by Mrs. Potter Palmer ... [et al.]. Paris: Boussod, Valadon & Co., 1893. Disponible en ligne [<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/outsidelink.html/http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HBS.BAKER:416905>] [30 mars 2005].

# URBAN PARTICIPATION AND TRANSNATIONAL SPACE: THE CORDOBA CASE STUDY

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Thinking and reflecting about the experiences of citizen participation took me from the urban to the regional scale, always with a focus on the relationship between the institutionality defined by the political-administrative system and the practices developed citizen's praxis.

Within the framework of the *Programa de Estudios Culturales sobre MERCOSUR*, where the debate was concentrated on the tension between the democratic institutionality of the mentioned regional process of integration and the emergent citizenship in Latin America, my work was oriented to analyze the relationship between stately defined regional instances and citizen participation. Particularly, the form in which the city "neighbors" of Cordoba integrate themselves in the supranational processes of decision making - Neighbors Forum of Mercociudades Network-, from a perspective that privileged the involved groups' autonomy.

Later, this regional integration process was taken on board as a opportunity context of action for actors such as Women - *Centro Subregional de Intercambio del Cono Sur*, Alahua (CISCSA) -, the *Congreso Bolivariano de los Pueblos* and groups from the World Social Forum in Córdoba. In an effort that left from the hypothesis that affirms the destitution of the National State for the definition of the temporality and spatiality of the citizen participation.

As much in the case of the Neighbors as the Women of the city of Córdoba, the performance in the regional scale made possible to problematize new questions. Subjects that had not been considered by the integrating processes as well as the institutionalization of alternative spaces of participation in the supranational deliberation. In this sense, we can say that the collective action in the regional scale contributed to the redefinition of the representation structures of state led spaces of integration.

Nevertheless, in these works, the "transnational participation", in spite of referring the citizen practices that take place beyond space-temporary limits defined by the political-administrative system of the national state, finished limiting itself upon analysis of the supranational space of integration whose subjects of law are the national states. Spaces in which the citizenship is gotten up ad hoc or developing to spaces public who "watch" the formal spaces of decision making - parallel forums and conferences.

The proposal of the present paper is oriented to thus reconstruct the way traveled by an urban citizen movement that puts in evidence the local-global tension, in the transit of the local conflicts to its integration in frameworks that allow them to give new interpretations to their surroundings and re-to mean their practices, allowing to think a transnational dimension us. We talked about to the experience of the Citizen Network Beginning of the Beginning [PdElP Network].

*Transnationalization of Solidarities and Women Movements*  
*Transnationalisation des solidarités et mouvements des femmes*

### *Context of emergency: broken contacts between the political leadership and the citizenship.*

The scene of radicalization of the representation crisis in Argentina, referred to the mediation of the political parties, begins to be outlined in October of 2000 with the resignation of the vice-president -Carlos "Chacho" Alvarez<sup>1</sup>- and became evident in the legislative elections that took place in October 2001, when the percentage of negative votes -invalid and in blank- reached protagonism. This surpassed the volume of positive votes in Capital Federal (29%) and Santa Fe (40%), while in the metropolis of Buenos Aires and Córdoba they remained in second and third place, respectively. It is important to emphasize, in first place, that this growth of the negative votes occurred by the expansion of the invalid vote and, in second place, that the electoral non-participation was made feel in those elections also, reaching the highest level of the last times - 30% of the electoral register.

In a survey, made by the *Centro de Estudios de la Opinión Pública*, the interviewed people reveal that they did not believe in the politicians, that they did not find any candidate who represents them or, simply, that they did not want "to give money to the politicians" -the parties receive a sum by each vote emitted in behalf of them. In the city of Córdoba, the voters chose, in the invalid vote, drawn characters accompanied by the phrase: "he does not have hands, perhaps does not rob" -they used the popular Clemente, a Caloi character.<sup>2</sup>

After this electoral process, the 19 of December the public space was occupied by an intense and plural collective manifestation that extended by the main corners and squares of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Rosario: the "*cacerolazo*".<sup>3</sup> This protest, where the social identities were suspended, dismissed any situation of representation to the voice of: "*que se vayan todos, que no quede ni uno solo*"<sup>4</sup> and overthrew the president, Antonio de la Rúa.

Also in December of 2001, an e-mail network spread a message in the city of Córdoba, that would be repeated on the local radio, inviting the people "to celebrate Christmas in the squares and where, in a peaceful form of dialogue, would be expressed the complaints, protests... with

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<sup>1</sup> Carlos Alvarez had arrived at the vice-presidency in 1999, with the triumph of the "Alliance" -that reunited the *Unión Cívica Radical* [UCR] and to the *Frente País Solidario* [FrePaSo] -. As planned by the National Constitution, presided the Senate when a denounce about "briberies in the Senate" took public state. It was for the approval of the labor law reform -well-known like law of "labor relaxation"- and surrounded the Ministry of Work. The demands of the vice-president to investigate the denounce and the changes made by the Executive in the portfolio of ministers -who removed *frepasistas* members from the government- demonstrated the spacing to the interior of the Alliance that finished in the resignation of Alvarez. The vice-president resigned in a press conference with a speech based on the ethics and transparency.

<sup>2</sup> In Córdoba, these phrases were found in order to void the vote: "Not any party. I vote no one. Impugned vote", or votes which candidate's list included word games like: "*Dejen C de Robar. Noles Creemos. Novoto Más. Basta D Políticos*", etc. Another vote, promoted by internet from Buenos Aires, chose San Martín, Belgrano and others national heroes. Some voters just put pieces of paper where had been written, for example: "Ha! I deceived you. Do not count this vote. It is not valid" (Cf. Carreras, 2001)

<sup>3</sup> The name refers to the symbol of the protest: the pans. That day everybody went out whit their pans and made noise with them.

<sup>4</sup> "Throw them all out, don't leave one"



the idea that the neighbors began to gain spaces" (Scicolone, interview 2004). The idea was "to organize meeting spaces [...] to speak and to see, between everyone, what could be done?" (Cf. Principio del Principio. ces.html, February 2006). The proposal obtained answers and support from diverse places in the world -calls and messages sent by e-mail. That was the "beginning of the beginning", the beginning of a movement that defined it self as non-partisan but not apolitical. It was oriented to become the citizens aware and responsible in order to "avoid the beginning of the end" (Bossio, interview 2004).

En diciembre muchos de nosotros estábamos muy enojados, el enojo era como la fuerza, hay que pararse y decir basta no a ésta situación coyuntural sino a toda esta estructura corrupta. Han hecho lo que han querido, nos han metido todos los versos que se les han antojado, nos han robado el país y bueno... nosotros como ciudadanos empezamos a darnos cuenta de que esto es nuestro y que tenemos que participar. (Scicolone, interview 2004)

Thus, since December of 2001, new local and singular forms of citizen participation are located in the limit of the political-administrative system, although without losing it as a reference of their speeches and praxis. For some authors, as Francisco Naishtat and Federico Schuster, the collective action adopts a "civic matrix", that in spite of precise and particular reclamations, tends "to reframe its narrative identity and its validity pretensions from a citizen story and a fight for rights, than from a strictly particular reclamation" (2005, p 16). Its sense would be given, for other authors, by the "reencounter with the capacities of the multitudinous thing, the collective, the neighborhood thing" where "a new and active opening to fluxes" is being conceived (Colectivo de Situaciones, 2002, p. 34, 39).

What was observed, during the crisis and in the later protest organizational forms, was the sprouting of a complex network of alliances with diverse objectives, based in the exercise of the resistance, autonomy and citizen control in deliberative instances.

Lo que aparece son nuevas formas de participación política autónomas del control de los representantes que transforman el mero derecho de libre expresión en el ejercicio organizado de petición y resistencia frente a las autoridades públicas [...] generando formas más racionales y participativas de representación y control ciudadano [...] el gobierno representativo aparece como un marco para desarrollar actividades autogestionarias y locales que debe ser reformulado en la dirección de un republicanismo deliberativo, donde la gestión de la cosa pública no se restrinja a la manipulación de las elites amparadas en la razón de Estado sino que incorpore efectivamente instancias colectivas de participación deliberativa y control ciudadano. (PÉREZ et al, 2005, p 411)

In the case of Córdoba, in March of 2002, those who proposed the celebration of the "beginning of the beginning" in christmas made, through massive mass media, a new invitation to Córdoba citizenship and reunited 400 citizens at the National University of Córdoba's facilities.

Members of different organizations participated in that meeting, among them the neighborhood assemblies, which also developed throughout 2002 diverse actions that, in their heterogeneity, questioned the capacity of the actual institutionality to face the demands of participation from the citizens in the frame definition of the political action of the society in that they live in.

According to it, Carrizo affirms: "new publics take the word extending, in fact, the tight established mechanisms to process the popular sovereignty." (Carrizo et al, 2002, p 9), and they are related on the base of the premise: "to do something" with "the others" which also "are doing something", in such a way to make visible the possible convergences between the different social movements objectives, and thus to maintain in operation the assemblies and the conscience of "not being alone in the struggle". In this way, the extension and the permanence of deliberations had results in two orders, on one hand, to give content to "throw them all go away", the watchword that had given base to the movement, and on the other hand, to establish the foundations by watching and permanently attacking the scopes of local and provincial management (Carrizo et al, 2002, p. 8).

### *Window on a local opportunity: the impeachment of the mayor*

During the second semester of 2002, a set of political and union organizations –for example, Municipal Workers and Employees Unique Union [SOUEM] and the Light and Force Union -, NGOs, citizen movements – for example, the citizen network “Beginning of the beginning”-, professional self-summoned associations –for example, Self-summoned Architects [ARCA]-, neighbors from the neighborhood assemblies, and so forth, they promoted the impeachment process of Córdoba’s Mayor -German Kammerath. The impeachment process was "the cause" that canalized the activities of the citizen movement. I was recognized as the opportunity "to work in concrete things" (Bossio, interview 2004), as the passage from the deliberative and demand instance to the action or to "the pro-active" instance, in the members of the network words.

Pdelp Network grouped with some of the mentioned actors, looking for developing the mentioned objective, in the "Multisectorial". This form of organization presents a kind of "rupture" with the past, given that it is about it was a temporary joint integrated by different and diverse organizations -unions, political parties and civil society organizations.

In the particular case, the Multisectorial conformation represented the union of "all" of those that somehow felt excluded from the power organization of the new local management, and, in general terms, of "those who lost before the advance of the neoliberalism" or those who responded to the violence installed in the State, that the local management represented. We are referring to the symbolic violence at the governmental corruption, "a kind of public insult" (Auyero, 2002).

Different from a political alliance, in the Multisectorial the political praxis and interests of its members are divergent; nevertheless, the presence of a greater threat, a common adversary adds them temporarily. According to it, De Piero affirms: "the same plurality that these spaces implies, helps to liquefy certain confrontations, since the sectors with greater divergences can be interceded by others who are closer and can act as a hinge" (2005, p. 13). In the case of Córdoba

it was not different, and with the end of the "cause" and the "adversary" period of management, the Multisectorial dissolved.

Nevertheless, and in spite of not to have obtained the mayor impeachment, this organized effort, not very often seen in our city, represented a strong bet on democracy made by the citizen movement. The task of "joining the necessary signatures", had like answer, at first, more than 50 thousand signatures to qualify the process, and then surpassed the numbers demanded by the municipal law, with approximately 113 thousands signatures in 30 days.

The elections for the renovation of the local Executive were perceived by the network as a new opportunity for the action.

A pesar de que una de las reacciones normalizadoras del sistema político para atenuar movimientos de participación son las elecciones -ya que instalan agenda y despejan el escenario de la opinión pública de las demandas de la ciudadanía- en este caso las elecciones traían una serie de factores novedosos [renovación del sistema de partidos, un candidato diferente, relación de trabajo conjunto con Poder Ciudadano] en el escenario político. (Red Ciudadana Principio del Principio, 2005)

Thus, in September 24 of 2003 at the historic town council building -*Cabildo*-, the candidates to mayor signed, at the request of the PdElP Network, the "Intention Act of Public Commitment of Government Transparency". In this act each signer -in case of gaining the municipal elections- was committed to obey the "20 points" which were detailed in the same one, referred to public policies of transparency and citizen's participation. Passed the elections, December 11 of 2003, the elected mayor -Luis Juez<sup>5</sup>, *Partido Nuevo's* candidate- subscribed, as a continuation and a confirmation of the assumed commitment, an Agreement of Public Commitment of Government Transparency called "*Programa Discrecionalidad Cero*".

This agreement was impelled, at local level, by the Citizen Network Beginning of the Beginning and, at national level, by the Foundation *Poder Ciudadano* -national chapter of Transparency International. In addition, it was signed in a public act witnessed by eleven organizations of different provinces from the country - *Andhes* Foundation /Tucumán, *Poder Ciudadano* Foundation/Buenos Aires, *Forins* Foundation /Jujuy, *Ciudadanía Activa*/La Pampa, *Participación Ciudadana*/Tierra del Fuego, *Foro Ecologista de Paraná*/Entre Rios, *Nueva Generación Argentina* Foundation /Rosario, *Favim* and *Grupo Ágora*/Mendoza, *Geos* Foundation /Córdoba- which conform the Federal Network for the Democracy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Luis Juez had occupied the Anticorruption Public Prosecutor's Office of the province of Córdoba. From this place he made forts denunciations that involved civil employees of the province's government as much as the Governor. This action as well as his later destitution made him won the neighbors affection. Promoted by his increasing popularity and with the support of some people form the traditional parties - in disagreement leaderships-, and the assembly movement of the city, the *Partido Nuevo* was constituted. Its basic slogans were: transparency of government and participation of the neighbors. It obtained 62% of the valid votes.

<sup>6</sup> In December of 2003 was created this "network of action and mutual care" oriented to strengthen the interchange of experiences and the joint operations developing. Its presence in the signature of the Act, *Transnationalization of Solidarities and Women Movements*  
*Transnationalisation des solidarités et mouvements des femmes*

The Pdelp Network assumed the responsibility of controlling the fulfillment of the points decided in the Act, with Poder Ciudadano Foundation as a monitorship.

### *Frameworks or contents for "that they all go away"*

We can say, according with Perez, Argelino and Rossi, that 2001 crisis faced the Argentine citizenship with the "decomposition" of their foundations -transgression of republican controls, representation crisis and dismantling of the Welfare State- and offered the possibility of redefining its political practices from "the extended" political participation, the assembly deliberation, the redefinition of the political representation entails and the revision of the decision-making processes (2005, p 387).

A member of the Pdelp Network bases on the participation the new form of making politics affirms:

La palabra es participación, de ahora en más se acabó la pura representación. Yo voy a nombrar a mi representante y los voy a controlar. El control es participación. Yo voy a votar a mis representantes, pero también quiero participar. Es decir, no me voy a quedar estático, ni esperando que me resuelvan mis problemas, los problemas los resolvemos todos. Entonces me parece que el tema de la participación es la nueva forma, concepto que resumiría en forma integral los nuevos tiempos que se avecinan, la nueva política. (Proyecto Ciudadanía , 2005, our underline)

The collective action horizon is not the civil disobedience, as could be the case of other movements post 19 and 20, which inclusively took the action format spread by the human rights movements in the country: "*escrache*". The "reclamation of rights", that characterizes the civic matrix of the movement, becomes in the public scene to traverse of campaigns oriented to the "exercise of the rights". It means "to have presence and incidence in the politics", specifically, in the exercise of the "rights that allows the public management accountability" (Principio del Principio. ces.html, February 2006). Nevertheless, in the activist's words, that recognize the transforming potential of the actual institutionality, is possible to see an inquiring about its democratic legitimacy.

Las instituciones tienen un aspecto positivo, respetar las instituciones en un sistema democrático donde las instituciones fueron creadas democráticamente... tiene que ser debatida permanentemente esa institucionalidad. Pero mientras los mecanismos para cambiarla están instituidos, en la propia constitución, en todo el cuerpo de derecho, entonces se puede cuestionar las instituciones dentro del sistema... (Proyecto Ciudadanía , 2005, our underline)

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from the members of the Network Pdelp's perspective, acted providing with "national witnesses" to the commitment, in other words, contributed to publish it.

In its rhetoric of the change, the urgency in of PdeIP proposal is centered in the risk that the inactivity and the indifference of the citizen mean. The network tries to fight against “*no te metás*” –don’t get involved-, reminiscence of the period of military government and repression in the country; where the inactivity seems more prudent than the public space occupation and, inclusively, than the interference on the political-administrative system dynamics. This last one would include the form in which the democratic representation relationship would be being interpreted, which was dominated by a extraordinary delegation during the 90s.

Then, why the action, the mobilization and the participation are not only possible but desirable when everything seems the "beginning of the end"?

The movement makes an optimistic reading of the political conjuncture, especially about the involvement of the citizenship in the public matters. The reached mobilization during the impeachment process offered an unpaired moment that opens a window of hope for the change. It operates like a real parameter of the possible that it increases the potentiality of the movement to interact with the political-administrative system.

Principio del Principio no está en contra de la protesta, pero su intención es ir más allá, y pasar de la mera queja a la propuesta. La intención es fomentar el debate y la búsqueda conjunta de soluciones a las necesidades más urgentes, pero también a las legítimas aspiraciones de mediano y largo plazo que nos merecemos los argentinos. (Principio del Principio. ces.html, February 2006, our underline)

The promise associated to the collective action is linked to the Justice demand that characterized the events of 19 and 20 of December of 2001, especially when it talks about the factual democratic institutionality. In such sense, the focus is on the management transparency and the opportunities of participation in the decision-making processes.

The identity configuration, that provides the base to the collective action, fluctuates between "citizens of a country in crisis" and "neighbors of the city of Córdoba". PdeIP presents as network of "mobilized citizens" -many of them are linked with civil society organizations -, nonpartisan, without profit aims.

[...] no es un partido político, ni tiene aspiraciones en ese sentido. Tampoco está en contra de los partidos políticos tradicionales ni de los que pudieran crearse como nuevas opciones. La Red entiende que su acción está destinada a fortificar la posición de las personas en cuanto a su condición de ciudadanos [...] (Principio del Principio. ces.html, February 2006)

In this sense, it assumes, like collective challenges and north of its practices, the following principles: sense of the common good; fairness and nonviolence; equal, protagonist and responsible participation; accounts rendering; and punishment to the treason and the corruption. These definitions have allowed to the group extension by the integration of diverse mutual reconnaissance nets and by interactions that surpass the local space (for example, Federal Network for Democracy).

During the 2002, since the meeting made in the National University of Córdoba, the Network work was organized in seven commissions: health, education, social, economy, policy, culture and justice. With the decrease of the activism, the developed public sphere turned on a space, on one hand, of withdrawal and (re)grouping and, on the other hand, of base and training of its

influence on a wider public. Thus, the Network began to systematize the acquired knowledge, working on the analysis of the developed practices results. In this process, their members identified like "strengths", their monitoring practices ("social accountability") and their linking role.

Nevertheless, the frameworks construction reveal as a deep process of deliberation between activists who have divergent points of view, described by disputes about the senses given to the "new politics". Consequently, these deliberations refer to the recognition of the political opportunity, as much for the interaction with the political-administrative system, as for the integration of a wider networks in contents and influences.

Nosotros nos proponíamos [...] abrir como una especie de debate desde abajo [...] un debate que diera como resultado un modelo a aplicar en Córdoba, un modelo propio. No un modelo propio a la cordobesa impuesto desde arriba sino un modelo propio a la cordobesa construido desde abajo. Esto es una quijotada... pero creíamos que esto es estar en la línea de aportar un granito de arena en la construcción de la ciudadanía. (Proyecto Ciudadanía , 2005)

The movement repertory of action consolidates on "monitoring" or social accountability. Natalia Molina, a Network member, identifies the following practices like typical of this type of repertory:

[...] monitorear el comportamiento de los funcionarios públicos, exponer y denunciar sus actos ilegales y activar a las agencias horizontales de control. [...] ejercer influencia sobre el sistema político y las burocracias públicas. Puede canalizarse tanto por vías institucionales (acciones legales o reclamos ante los organismos de supervisión) como no institucionales (movilizaciones sociales y las denuncias mediáticas). (Molina, 2003, p. 5)

Initially, focused in the "institutional roads". They participated in the mayor's impeachment process (see above), monitored the Constitutional Matters Commission of the Town Council (about the established schedule, subjects, the internal discussions identifying the different positions, the voting, the performance of other spectators at the meetings, the scene description and, finally, they registered everything that was not understood, their feelings and intuitions). From these records, they made three information documents that were spread by e-mail and published in the site "Civic Journalism", a local newspaper project (*La Voz del Interior*).

At the moment the activity is developed in around the *Acta Discrecionalidad Cero* monitoring, specially centered in which it talks about the right of access to public information, transparent contracts and participatory budget. In all these actions the axis is given by the citizen's participation, in the decision-making processes, based on the knowledge of alternative policies and its consequences.

The *Acta Discrecionalidad Cero*, like a practical model, was developed by Poder Ciudadano Foundation to establish a frame in the joint between the organizations and the different government instances. The *Acta Discrecionalidad Cero* is defined, by Poder Ciudadano, like "agreements" by means of which the "authorities" are committed to implement public policies related to the transparency -referred to the implementation of a system of accounts rendering and management monitoring- and the "good practices" of government. Understanding as good practices those that foment and extend the citizen participation.

This model was adopted initially by *Participación Ciudadana*, from Ushuaia, and later by the PdelP Network, who adapted its contents to the actual legal frame and to the local political reality. It is possible to emphasize that the members of the Network consider that this Act "summarizes" and "empower" the activities that are being developed since May of the 2002. This instrument has been spread by organizations from the different provinces, adapting it to each context and using most of the time the presence of *Poder Ciudadano*, as witness and external monitor.

Also the Promotional Group of the Participative Budget for Córdoba [GPPPCba] was constituted. This group committed itself with the development and implementation of the democratization process of the resources management and municipal expenses. This group, that maintains a tension between the continuity and the autonomy with the organization assumed by PdelP, assumed the monitoring of the participatory budgeting experience implemented by the municipality:

Finalmente la matriz que predominó era un poco esto, que finalmente desembocó en el seguimiento, es decir, bueno... existe una experiencia, no ponernos en la vereda del frente, arrimémonos y veamos, si nos permiten, de qué se trata, qué está sucediendo. No opinemos por versiones, estemos en el lugar y en el momento y, a partir de ahí, vamos a poder opinar. [...] bajemos a la tierra, veamos la experiencia y en base a la experiencia, desde la experiencia misma saquemos conclusiones. Dejemos un poco de lado lo conceptual y vayamos más a lo pragmático, si se quiere, pero en el buen sentido. Entonces nos pusimos en una actitud no confrontativa pero sí de seguimiento crítico. (Proyecto Ciudadanía , 2005)

In addition, the group elaborated an alternative participatory budget proposal and, to its way of thinking, that "goes beyond" the model developed by the Municipality. That proposal has been complemented with a regulation project the *Juntas de Participación Vecinal* -Meetings of Neighbors Participation.<sup>7</sup> Also, at request of the GPPPCba it was constituted, in 2004, the Participative Budget for Córdoba Permanent Forum.

Again, on the base of the Multisectorial, the Forum has by objective to join all the local organizations -political, academic, union, social and citizen- interested in spreading and promoting the citizen participation in the public matters, with emphasis in the implementation of an integral process of participatory budgeting in the city of Cordova. It is a matter of the creation of an informal public sphere, outside the institutional design of the municipality, which acts in name of the extension of the local democracy, facing the restrictive proposals of the municipal budget democratization made by the political power.

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<sup>7</sup> Given that is this "territorial organism" which is attributed, in the Municipal Law, "to propose the neighborhood's priorities" of public works and services and "to practice the mechanisms of participation and opinion on [municipality's] programs, projects" (Articles 155 and 156).

Ahora, como siempre, lo fundamental es entender que un horizonte de participación ciudadana existe cuando se lo construye desde abajo. Si usted votó, no se vuelva a su casa. Pregúntese qué puede hacer para prolongar en su práctica cotidiana el sentido de su voto. Si no, la democracia (que se alimenta de la vitalidad de la ciudad, de la participación voluntaria y lúcida de los ciudadanos y sus creaciones alternativas y autónomas de poder) muere en la urna. De tristeza y soledad. (Invitation for the Participative Budget Forum, february of 2005)<sup>8</sup>

### *Convergence across borders*

As Jelin affirms, "more than any previous moment in the history, the expression of collective social demands in the local space contains in itself the same multiplicity of senses implied by [the significant changes in the dynamics of the entailment between places, times, actors and levels] in the interpenetration, joint and superposition of scales" (1996). In this sense, in the Pdelp Network intervention at the local public space we can identify a search, referred to practices and contents, that finish integrating the local, national and transnational scale, as much in the definition and deepening of the frameworks from which they tried to understand and to modify the local situation, as in order to taking part in the national and transnational scale for the diffusion of what they had assumed like principle of action: transparency and participation. Thus, while other groups linked to the protest post 19 and 20 of December of 2001 in Argentina assumed organizational forms based in the territory -like the *piqueteros* and the neighborhood assemblies<sup>9</sup>-, the Pdelp Network acts on the base of "relations of proximity" with national and international nongovernmental organizations. In which the Network is looking for a space of recognition, as much as a resources supply.

As a recognition space, the incorporation to networks -advocacy networks- represents newness in terms of citizen claim. Given that it surpasses the limits of the idea of citizenship recognized and guaranteed by the positive law of the national state, to talk about democratic faculties recognized and guaranteed in public spheres or spaces -formal and informal- that cross the territorial borders. Today, although the alter, or adversary that justice reclamation goes to, determines the irruption of the collective action in the argentine public sphere, continues being the State. The more embracing informal public spaces -networks and forums-, that congregate national actors and more than that, are valued like opportunities that empower the incidence in the redefinition of the normative framework that regulate the action of the citizens in the local scale.

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<sup>8</sup> Now as always, the most important thing is to understand that citizen participation exists when its built from the bottom. If you voted do not come back home. Ask yourself: what can I do to extend I my daily practice the sense of my vote? If you do not, the democracy (that is feed by the city vitality, volunteer and clear citizen's participation and its alternative and autonomous power creation) dies in the ballot box, because of its sadness and loneliness.

<sup>9</sup> It is possible to emphasize that the assembly movement in Argentina bets in the construction of space, that we could denominate a transnational public space, with the development of the "Autonomous January" meeting.



Thus, when we observed the repertory of the collective action, in the case of the PdelP Network, and the outstanding presence of *Poder Ciudadano* in the consolidation of the content and format that assume their practices, we have nothing more to do than to ask for this actor with as much ascending in the Córdoba scene.

*Poder Ciudadano*, define itself as a "network of people and institutions undertaken with the public matters in the local, national and international scale, for democratic and inclusive societies", whose objective is "to promote the citizen participation, the transparency and the access to the public information to fortify the institutions of the democracy through the collective action" (*Poder Ciudadano. ces.html*, February of 2006). In other words, they identify in the collective action the opportunity to harness the "public impact" of their actions, thus, it is oriented to the construction of which it denominates "diffuse power" from the joint of local experiences, like Pdel P Network, and international ones. In this case, they join international networks that have as objective the fight against the corruption, through the development of actions and tools to promote the transparency in the State administration.

As a national chapter of Transparency the International [TI], *Poder Ciudadano* works fundamentally to increase the levels of accountability and transparency in its country, monitoring the performance of key institutions -the legislative ones and "pressing" for the necessary political reform from a "nonpartisan" way (*Transparency International. Ces.html*. February of 2006). The Transparency programs provide resources to the national chapters, in form as much of attendance for the development of policies and implementation of projects, like of development of information tools, based in the premise that the main tool to fight against the corruption is the right of access to information.

In this way, speeches and technologies, institutional developments are being promoted in the diverse campaigns in the national and transnational scale, that come together strategically in the local scale, where they are adopted and later socialized in domestic understandings -free access to the information and participative management of the public resources-. For example, the set of guidelines, that orients the discussion and definition, of participative budget model for the city of Cordova. In this case, the discussions and interchanges canalized by the *Central de Trabajadores Argentinos*, about to the participatory budgeting implemented in Porto Alegre (Brazil), and the developments of *Poder Ciudadano*, in the systematization off different experiences from the region, permeate the movement debates.

Antes de que se largara el presupuesto participativo en Córdoba, [...] lo que nosotros disponíamos eran de elementos teóricos, teoría conceptual, nada más. Es decir, en Porto Alegre, tal cosa; en Córdoba/España, tal otra cosa; en Ecuador en Cuenca, tal otra cosa... y de todo esto uno extraía elementos para decir: qué interesante, estos han profundizado la participación así, la han sustentado de esta manera... entonces, nosotros hacíamos críticas desde lo conceptual. (Proyecto Ciudadanía , 2005)

The debates and interchanges contributed for the definition of the premises on which the alternative model of participative budget for the city was constructed. Namely, public scope of co-management -understood as co-presence and public/private interaction sphere-; universal rules of participation -where the universality of the rules do not only make reference to the

equality of participants status, but also to the right of access to the information (being distanced of the Brazilian experience in the conception of this point) -; pre-established method of allocations -like counterpoint of the discretionally public decisions and equivalent of transparency and distributive fairness-; and finally, public control of the State -referred to the permanent and shared evaluation for its democratic reform.

But these premises, not only gave viability to the construction of an alternative model, they also contributed to create a minimum consensus that endorses and orients, as a mandate, the intervention of the movement's activists in embracing public spaces. It is possible to emphasize the participation in the Participative Budget National Forum Budget (Buenos Aires 2004); the workshop of Participatory Budgeting and Social Control of the Public Budget (Ushuaia 2004); the debate on participative budget in *Calle Ancha*, a space of Cordoba National Radio (2005). And inclusively, the carried out effort in order to "appear", spreading the experience, and "incidence" in the dynamic and the decisions that surround to the transnational space; when its about elaborating transformation proposals of the democratic institucionality at local scale as much as national one. In this sense, we must point out the participation in the International Observatory of the Participative Democracy (Buenos Aires 2004) - GPPPCba is a member of the "best practices" jury- and, more recently, in the World Social Forum, through the workshop "School of Citizenship, Democracy and Participative Budget experiences Network ", looking to built a network about participative budget.

### *By way of a pause...*

We have reconstructed the covered ground by the citizen Network Beginning of the beginning, from the local conflicts to its integration in different networks, national and international ones, linked to the promotion of the transparency of the public acts and to extend citizen participation beyond the vote. Initiated during a moment of breaks or fractures in the Argentine democratic institucionality, consolidated itself interacting with the political-administrative system through the breaches offered not only by the institutional design, but also by the extraordinary political situation that opened opportunities for the creative phase of the local collective action.

When it is about thinking the national and transnational space, the Pdelp Network tries to integrate itself to the contemporary debates about participative democracy through the participation in networks. We can affirm that Pdelp does it in two-way traffic, on one hand, as a form of meeting with "others" that share their demands and to give visibility to their experience, as much about the newness of its practices as in terms of denunciation of the democratic deficit of the local political system.

On the other hand, space of national and transnational solidarities allows them to gather support, that legitimize their practices and the values that motivated their action; incorporating them -not without contradictions- in a sphere that surpasses the particularisms of local political dynamics. And to collect resources that contribute to the sustainability of the movement. In this sense, as Tarrow (1998) analyzes, the national and transnational networks are offered, in this case, like an external actor that supplies resources and opportunities, talking about the strictly

financial thing, as much as the diffusion of basic knowledge, forms of organization and action, that they use to democratically defy the political-administrative system.

In spite of some scholars, like Mc Adam (1999), who maintain that the movements that fight by the effective use of the rights in democratic systems are "little in ambitious", we consider, from the Córdoba case of study, that these struggles contribute to the expansion and fortification of the public sphere in political systems where not only the legitimacy but also the effectiveness - effective use of the democratic order- is questioned. These demands actions developed by those who lack regular access to the public decision-making process have the potential to contribute to the publicity of the political-administrative system, about the internal scope -local, national.

Nevertheless, it is at the transnational dimension of its practices where we can question its democratic potentialities. Both in the consideration of the transnational space like space of solidarities that go beyond of the local particularisms, as much as in the form of insertion in the informal and transnational public sphere. In other words, the conditions in which these movements exert the citizenship when they are integrated to the international networks.

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**THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN AND HEALTH MEETINGS:  
CATALYST AND END PRODUCT OF THE  
GLOBAL FEMINIST HEALTH MOVEMENT**

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I will begin with a confession. In early 2005, a few professors and I were discussing transnationalism after just having come from a lecture about it.

As most of us were teaching women' studies, our discussions revolved around the power dynamics of race, class and gender as well as disparities between First and Third World academes. One point of discussion was whether transnationalism was any more useful to resolving the power dynamics and inequities that occur whenever academics peer into the lives of the marginalized.

As one Marxist colleague put it, "another handle on us, is it? Another method to maintain their legitimacy by bridging back to our struggles?"

The suspicions posed by colleagues about power relations within academia and between academia and the world's poor and oppressed are a question I wish to note before entering into discussions about the feminist movement and transnationalism. I agree with Nayereh Tohidi (UCLA, [international.ucla.edu/cms/files/060518\\_transnational\\_feminism.pdf](http://international.ucla.edu/cms/files/060518_transnational_feminism.pdf) April 15, 2006)

that international feminist solidarity has been around for sometime now; that this international solidarity has been challenged by and responded to the processes of globalization and thus the nature of these networks has changed. But she makes clear that:

the academic and theoretical dimension of these networks is what we call transnational feminism and the debate around it has taken place especially within postcolonial feminist studies (Ibid, 5).

To be consistent with the theoretical insights that are foundational to transnationalism, we cannot fail to understand the academes own interpellation in the power dynamics we seek to analyze. In the light of the attempt to talk about building solidarities using this new academic lens, I find it necessary to at least note that question first before I delve into the IWHM process. As I shall be using the lever of positionality and identity for the rest of the paper, I also thought it methodologically necessary to state my own context.

The invitation to this conference came last September 2005, after I had just returned from the 10<sup>th</sup> International Women and Health Meeting (IWHM) held in New Delhi, India. Indeed, it was the

proximity of the two events that to a large extent caused my decision to propose to do a paper on the IWHM.

The IWHM is a 29 year old, process that I got involved in when I helped organize the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM in Manila in 1990. Since then, I have attended each meeting except one, and have served on the international advisory group (IAC) of several of the meetings including the last one.

Self-reflexivity was dictated by the topic of the paper. One of the most interesting things about the IWHM is that it is a non-institutionalized process that that began in 1977 (Third International Women and Health Committee Meeting Organizing Committee 1981). So at the very beginning of the paper, I was trapped in one of those questions transnationalism also seeks to answer: for whom do I speak? What right do I have to speak of the IWHM history and its processes? What right do I have to make an assessment of a process I have played only a small part of?

My attempt at “gaining permission” was to send a message to the International Advisory Board of the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM, asking what they thought of the idea of my writing a paper. An underwhelming number of the women sent encouragement while the others remained silent.

I have no idea what the silence means except that perhaps, because there are no hierarchies or governing bodies, no one really is in a position to give permission.

There is yet another problem. Because of the fact that the IWHM is non-institutionalized and therefore never kept official records in any one place, it has been extremely difficult to find documents. They are scattered in various countries. So here we come back to my second layer of positionality, my view is very cursory and remains unvalidated by the majority of those who have participated in the political project it describes. I have consulted many others (see acknowledgements below) and have sent this paper around also for corrections and suggestions. At the risk of being tiresome, I must state that I remain solely accountable for the paper.

Perhaps before I proceed further, I should describe the IWHM. The IWHM is a meeting the purpose of which is:

to exchange knowledge experience and ideas among women working in self - help health. (3<sup>rd</sup> IWHM Organizing Committee 1981, 3).

It is a venue for women’s health activists from around the world to gather..in order to take stock of the gains and setbacks in the area of women’s health and reproductive rights (Canadian Organizing Committee 9<sup>th</sup> IWHM 2002).

It has its roots in the global women’s movement and includes a wide range of organizations, networks, and grassroots women’s groups. In a world order where the default settings are always 'male', the feminist movement [even if it has developed differently in the different regions and with varying levels of political awareness] has contributed a great deal in creating spaces for women's perspectives to be heard and incorporated into knowledge building, policy formulation and in programme implementation. The debates and agenda setting around issues of development,

environment, population, women's reproductive rights and empowerment generated during the decade of the 1990s around the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro), ICPD (Cairo), and Women's Conference in Beijing are major milestones of the movement. Conceptually a lot of ground has been covered with the positioning of women's health beyond maternal roles and procreation. (Indian Organizing Committee of the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM 2005a, 1).

As we can see from the changing descriptions, it is a meeting of activist women's groups, some of which are working on health. The first meeting was held in Rome in 1977, and the most recent one was last held in September 2005 in New Delhi. Very little else can be said about it in general. It has no group of leaders to make sure that the process continues, it has not had a permanent office nor is there a repository of finances or documents.

And yet, a list of themes of the meetings is an extremely effective way to track the discourse that has shaped and been shaped by feminists around the broad issues of health, sexuality and reproduction in the last 28 years. (See Appendix A.) Unfortunately, I would have to write another paper in order to look into the numerous issues, debates, nuances, frameworks that emerged from the conferences. Yet another paper might want to relate these content issues to the broader political situations at the time when these were being discussed. It would also be interesting to know how the IWHMs have shaped and been shaped by the international women's health movement and its discourses.

Since 5<sup>th</sup> IWHM in Costa Rica until the 9<sup>th</sup> in Canada, a host country was decided upon at the end of the conference based on voluntary bids by participants from the countries who wanted to host it. Once the "country" had been decided that country (actually, of course, the individuals who volunteered) were fully responsible for pushing the process forward.<sup>1</sup>

Feminists looking at global social movements stress the feminist and transnational nature of this type of organizing.

For example, Cynthia Cockburn (2005, 6), looking at women's organized responses to militarism notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Manisha Gupte states that there is a variation for the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM where the next host country was NOT chosen at the closing plenary. This was based on the recommendation of the International Advisory Committee (IAC). The Indian Organizing Committee and its IAC are managing the process of selecting the host through networking with possible host organizations. This is not the first time this has been done. According to Martha de la Fuente, the 4<sup>th</sup> IWHM Organizing Committee was the forum which decided and negotiated with the Costa Rican women to host the 5<sup>th</sup> IWHM and started the process of negotiating "country hosts." Citing the documentation of the 4<sup>th</sup> IWHM, Martha notes that the 3<sup>rd</sup> IWHM ended with a resolution to hold a fourth meeting but no host was decided. Lyda Canson confirms that she bid for the Philippines to host the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM at the final plenary session in Costa Rica. Junice Demeterio Melgar who attended the 7<sup>th</sup> IWHM confirms that the decision for Brazil to host, was done in the final plenary as well. I was present when the decision for hosting of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> IWHM were decided. This was also done at the closing plenaries of the previous conferences.



..women are quite clear that they organize as women in order to be *in control of process*. They say they have developed distinctive methodologies of organization and action with which they can be comfortable--practices they cannot rely on finding in the wider anti-war coalitions, particularly where these are dominated by Trotskyist and other "hard left" elements with a preference for dogma, hierarchy and centralism."

As well Maylei Blackwell states:

..first there was kind of a more celebratory tone of the possibilities and challenges of so-called global civil society, in which myself and several other scholars who work in social movement organizing saw how these spaces were actually fraught with unequal power relationships and exclusions along some lengths that have been already talked about -- class, sexuality, race, gender. And how when we talk about who can participate in NGOs, who has access to the international arena, that we have to remember that as much as those are spaces or possibilities of liberation, they're also spaces where power operates. So that what's in a layer of analysis that people had.

But then on the other hand I think that we're tempering more pessimistic views that we saw, maybe about five years ago, that all social movement sectors are just dominated by NGOs and it's completely institutionalized and that's the end of transnational feminism. (UCLA , [international.ucla.edu/cms/files/060518\\_transnational\\_feminism.pdf](http://international.ucla.edu/cms/files/060518_transnational_feminism.pdf) April 15, 2006, 11)

So, we have this practice of a non-institutionalized solidarity process that finds its relevance in transnationalism as an ideological or political project (Kearney, 1995) even as it predates this by a decade or two.

I understand that globalization has weakened the state apparatus and has also called the grand narratives of nationalism and national identity into question (Appadurai 1999). However, one should note that the IWHM has survived because of its ability to reinscribe national and regional identities. Having participated in making the choice for the next "national" feminist movement to host the IWHM over the years, I am aware that we indeed negotiate a national identity for a particular group of women who will do the organizing work.

Belief in this identity is so strong that the country organizing committee has unilateral control over process, programme, fund raising, allocation of financial subsidies, venue. For the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM, Filipina activists started a new process that internationalized the decision-making process somewhat, by creating an International Advisory Committee (Philippine Organizing Committee 1992). At that time, it was composed of the representatives of several women and health networks. These were: The Argentine Commission of the 5<sup>th</sup> Feminist Encuentro of Latin America and the Caribbean, Catholics for a Free Choice, Feminist International Network for Resistance Against Reproductive and Genetic Engineering (FINNRAGE), International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), ISIS-International-Latin America and the Caribbean Women's Health Network, Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, First African

Regional Meeting on Women and Health Organizing Committee. The formation of IACs to advise the country organizing committees has continued as a practice for subsequent IWHMs. But the composition has changed over time.

At the time of the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM, we, the Filipina organizers, were already deeply aware of the growing ideological divisions that were occurring in the women's health movement. The attempt to bridge the divisions was part of the reason for the theme of the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM: "In Search Of Balanced Perspectives and Global Solidarity for Women's Health and Reproductive Rights." Those divisions were to grow stronger in the run up to the ICPD conference in 1994 and strain relationships between the several international and regional health networks.

Indeed, the 7<sup>th</sup> IWHM in Uganda in 1993 and the 8<sup>th</sup> IWHM in Brazil in 1997, were marked by the tensions brought about by the engagement of the women's health movement in the ICPD and the subsequent debates after the Programme of Action was adopted in Cairo.

But what is of interest here is that the reconceptualization of the membership of the international advisory committee (IAC) away from network representatives towards regional representations, consistent with the assertion of national/regional geopolitical identities. The 7<sup>th</sup> IWHM in Uganda in 1993 was the last time that representatives of the major networks comprised the IAC<sup>2</sup>.

The negotiated identities serve some of the political goals of the international women and health movement. The erosion of the role of the state in health care has taken a different trajectory from the erosion of the role of the state under neo-liberal economic globalization.

Whereas the WTO seems the primary enemy for large sectors of the poor under the regime of globalization, the significant actor over the decades and up to the present in the health sector has been the IMF and the World Bank. Structural adjustment programmes, austerity programmes, health sector reforms, users' fees and budget cuts for social services have been the most disastrous of policies for the health of the world's majority. These programmes have been under the control of the IMF-WB and remain so. Much of this work is still being done bilaterally between the government and the international agency concerned. It is still being accomplished through the surrender (forcible or otherwise) of the sovereignty of the nations and given legitimacy by the fact that the policies are accepted by elected governments.

Furthermore, because health is a social service, the state remains the main political target when there is absence or neglect.

This is not to say that the forces of globalization and institutions such as the WTO are not having an effect on health care systems. Even if this is so, it is not true that the challenges of globalization have so peripheralized the state that it is no longer a relevant political target for anti-globalization struggles. We have seen in the anti-globalization movement, how state fascism is used repeatedly to protect the interests of transnational corporations and to legitimize neo-liberalism.

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<sup>2</sup> Personal communication from Ana Maria R. Nemenzo who attended the 7<sup>th</sup> IWHM and served on the IAC of the 8<sup>th</sup> IWHM.

State fascism is also manifested in areas that are the purview of reproductive and sexual rights and freedoms. Repressive laws on sexual orientation, marriage and family relations, contraception, etc. are promulgated and enforced by national governments.

I am certain that national identity is consciously negotiated in IWHMs because through the years in plenaries and personal conversations, theoretical discussions and practical actions, I have seen proof that organizers and participants understand the arbitrariness of national identity and the situations when nationalism is used against women. Various IWHMs have taken cognizance of the violence perpetrated against women in the name of nationalism. We understand as well, how religious fundamentalism can conflate its interests with national patriarchies to the detriment of women's sexual and reproductive rights. In the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM we put up banners stating which countries participated in the main plenary hall. However, the countries were based on women's identifications rather than on the prevailing geo-political ones. One woman for example, asked to have her banner show the country Eritrea, much to the dismay of someone from Ethiopia who complained to me that she was a government official and would run into difficulties back home. Similarly several indigenous women's homeland names were out in the banners along with the names of countries which claimed these homelands as part of their national territory.

Indeed, the IWHM would never have survived if it did not understand that women are differentially positioned in interlocking systems of oppression. Women's bodies are the quintessential focus of the international women's health movement. As Francisco writes:

As feminist movements we are conscious of the fact that our bodies are replete with cultural and social meanings. Equally important is our understanding and experience that women's bodies are key arenas upon which many moral and political battles are being fought. It is through women's bodies that the community, state, family, fundamentalist forces (state and non-state), religion, the market and male identity seek to define themselves. Through a plethora of patriarchal controls these forces and institutions transform women's bodies into expressions of power relations. Women's bodies are in this way, at the center of authoritarian or democratic projects (2005, 1).

The recognition that interlocking systems of oppression construct our bodies and identities is central to the conviction of many women and health activists that the struggle for reproductive and sexual rights and freedoms is fundamental to resisting neo-liberal capitalist hegemony. It is also a tenet that prefigures current political theories, including certain trends of transnationalism that ground themselves in the body, sexuality and desire (Grewal and Kaplan 1994).

While we were organizing the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM, we idolized the Costa Rican women because the 5<sup>th</sup> IWHM was, the first IWHM to be held in the Third World. The 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM's call for balanced perspectives also reflected the need to bring the perspectives of Third World women into the feminist health movement. Being an organizer of the 6<sup>th</sup> conference, I remember how we established quotas to ensure that our subsidies went to women in Africa and Asia as well as women from poor communities in the First World. There was even an attempt to ensure that only a fourth of the participants would come from Europe and North America. This was

attempted not by limiting the number of women who would come from these countries, but by ensuring a proportionate number of subsidies for women in other regions.

I must also add that those of us who organized the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM had agreed that lesbian women and organizations had to be given more space and recognition within the heterosexist feminist movement. One of my clearest memories as an organizer was our effort to ensure that there be lesbian speaker<sup>3</sup> for the plenary on sexuality and workshop spaces for lesbian caucuses, in a situation where rooms and time were in short supply. The Philippine Organizing Committee made sure that I and another member, attended the initial lesbian caucus as a sign of support.<sup>4</sup>

The 8<sup>th</sup> IWHM in held in Rio de Janeiro in 1977 emphasized women's differing positionalities as well. The Brazilian Organizing Committee ensured that the theme, "Women's Health, Poverty and Quality of Life", was discussed in the light of gender, race and class approaches.

Similarly, the Indian Organizing Committee for the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM (2005a, 1) reiterated and added to the categories of race, class and gender:

It is now widely accepted that health is dependent on age, class, race, caste, ethnicity, culture, location, disability, marital status and sexual orientation; and that it is also intrinsically linked to the production and reproduction roles that women play.

Networks that actively participate in the IWHM processes, inscribe yet other identities. Beginning with the 5<sup>th</sup> IWHM, a number of networks began to have simultaneous or "back to back" network meetings at the IWHMs (Indian Organizing Committee 2005). The most striking example is that of Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights which has had a very close relationship to the early IWHM processes and continues to hold its general members meeting within IWHMs. Many speakers for plenaries and workshops are also chosen on the basis of network representation. Thus, speakers chosen because they are from other international networks like, Women Living Under Muslim Laws or Catholics for a Free Choice, highlight women's religious identities. Speakers from the International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS) or the International Gay and Lesbian Association (ILGA), also speak to identities based on sexual orientation.

For the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM in India, there was a conscious effort as well to consider the pedagogy of the conference by encouraging more alternative sharing/communication strategies and more creative approaches. For example, there was an impressive film fest that ran throughout the

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<sup>3</sup> Our ignorance on this matter was amazing because until the last minute, those of us working on programme matters, myself included, did not know whom to ask. This led to a lot of awkward situations until Rina Nissim finally saved us from disaster by agreeing to talk on short notice.

<sup>4</sup> Our support was unnecessary however, as the room was packed to capacity, mostly by Filipinas. I credit the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM and those lesbian caucuses with providing great impetus to the Filipina lesbian feminist movement at a time when it was just beginning. The effect of the solidarity exhibited by the lesbian women from other countries who patiently answered questions and revealed their personal struggles cannot be overstated.

length of the meeting. There were a number of art exhibits, booths, performances, etc. The rationale for this was to try to move away from the usual speeches, papers and workshops that privilege women with formal educational backgrounds. This consideration of pedagogical issues did not start at the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM. I remember this same call being made in one of the plenary sessions of the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM in the Philippines when one of our plenary speakers suggested that we belly dance.

At the 9<sup>th</sup> IWHM, I was requested to assist the Canadian Organizing Committee in running a conference-long workshop that would eventually come up with recommendations for the next IWHM. One of the recommendations of that workshop was to expand the IAC to accommodate more regional representatives as well as to include “sectoral” representatives. Whereas the Canadian IAC had only one representative for Europe for example, it was suggested that the Indian IAC should add a second representative for Eastern Europe. Similarly, Latin America and the Caribbean should be treated as two separate regions instead of one. In this way, a total of 16 world regions were identified. To these 16 regional representatives would be added sectoral representatives for women with disabilities, young women, indigenous women, lesbian women, elderly women. There were also suggestions that the major networks be involved (again) in the process<sup>5</sup>

I bring up this particular experience to illustrate as well the tensions and pitfalls that arise from identity politics. It was repeatedly pointed out during the workshop, that the size of such an IAC would be impractical. However, no solution could be found to this generally acknowledged problem. Indeed this large “list of identities” achieved easy consensus precisely because it tried to be all inclusive. But it really was not very practical.

The Indian Organizing Committee, being cognizant of these recommendations however, did have to find a way to solve the problem. I think this was achieved rather brilliantly when they took advantage of the fact that individual women do have access to various identity positions. The Indian IAC was a large group of 17 women who somehow managed to come from various world regions and sectors.

Here again, we find that the successful negotiation of identities for specific political ends. In this sense, the list of regions and sectors also illustrates the members of the “imagined community” (Andersen 1991) of the IWHM. The attempt to concretize that imagined community is interesting because it makes clear many unstated assumptions about that community.

As a member of several IACs I have learned the power that comes with the symbolisms necessary to evoke our shared imaginations. I always suggest to organizers that plenary sessions must be planned to include as wide a range of regional, country and sectoral representatives as speakers. The most successful opening ceremonies also are those that manage to signal that the IWHM will result in the equitable sharing of symbolic space.

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<sup>5</sup> I am reciting these facts from memory. Having tasked to write up and report the recommendations at the final plenary of the 9<sup>th</sup> IWHM, I am confident of the general outlines of those recommendations but I may have some of the details wrong.

That this is indeed an imagined community is illustrated further by the fact that it actually has a foundational myth. The Organizing Committee of the 3<sup>rd</sup> IWHM (1981, 1) writes that over 500 women from 36 countries participated and that for the first time funds were “especially secured to bring women from Asia, Africa and Latin America to enable a truly international exchange.”

A participant at the 3<sup>rd</sup> IWHM notes the beginnings of IWHMs internationalization both in terms of its participants and the raising of issues with regards to race and imperialism:

.. it was international in a small way at least. I lobbied and got funding from Dutch Ministry of Developmental Cooperation to bring my international classmates in Women and Development Studies at ISS. So at least one South African, a Sri Lankan, a Bangladeshi, a Thai and an Indian woman got travel grants. Moreover it is quite likely that some refugees from South America have participated in this meeting. In any case I remember that the very presence of non-European women raised questions about structural racism and imperialism in population control interventions, (under the then 'innocent' guise of family planning). Also in the Geneva conclusions you might find back a reference to the need to call for women to testify about their experiences with population control...the 'seed' for the 1984 tribunal!<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, another participant recalls that Geneva was in fact a meeting still very much dominated by participants from Europe. The real work of networking in order to internationalize the IWHM began for the fourth meeting:

In February 1982 in an ICASC coordination meeting there is a proposal to organize the next one. At the meeting on May 1982 there is a decision to try to work with groups outside Europe, to break the precedent of the first three meetings being in Europe. In August they contact groups in NY, Vancouver, Bombay, Boston and Mexico City. March 1983 Cidhal and other groups in Mexico are willing to have the Tribunal. September 1983 more women are registering but there is still no money. November 1983 CIDHAL has sent a letter saying they aren't able to have the Tribunal in Mexico City after all. The women of CEFEMINA in Costa Rica are willing to hold it, even if there is only half a year left and no money. However, the USA invades Granada and promises Nicaragua will be the next. A discussion and long phone conversations with Cefemina in the week after the invasion took place, after that was decided to have the meeting in London or Amsterdam.<sup>7</sup>

Having read this, I wondered whether the first two IWHMs had any significant participation from women outside Europe. Indeed, as I was to discover, the 1<sup>st</sup> IWHM in Rome in 1977 was a

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<sup>6</sup> Personal communication, Loes Keyzers. The 4th IWHM was conducted as a tribunal against population control policies. Loes also provided the information that this meeting was sponsored by ICASC and Platform Population Politic in The Netherlands. ICASC is the forerunner of Women's Global Network on Reproductive Rights; WGNRR was 'born' at this 4th IWHM.

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication, Martha dela Fuente. Martha is citing from the documentation of the 4<sup>th</sup> IWHM.

meeting of European groups and was merely labelled “the first IWHM” in retrospect (Indian Organizing Committee 2005b).

If questions of identity or positionality mark the beginnings of the shift from internationalism to transnationalism in the IWHMs, then the process may<sup>8</sup> have started at the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM and is fully recognized by the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM.

Estrada-Claudio, speaking in behalf of the Philippine Organizing Committee (Philippine Organizing Committee 1992) states in the keynote of the 6<sup>th</sup> IWHM:

There is a need for us to realize how heterosexual women have participated in the prejudice against lesbian women; how white women have participated in the prejudice against colored women; how women of the First World and members of the local ruling elites and have participated in the economic exploitation of Third World women; how women from dominant cultures tend to universalize their experiences and thereby deny the reality of others; how the intellectuals among us can fall into the trap of allowing decontextualized discourse to divide us over interpretations of a reality that cannot be decontextualized; how the non-academics among us stand in the way of necessary theorizing by insisting always on the primacy of praxis.

On the other hand the organizers of the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM (Indian Organizing Committee 2005a, 5) show a far more sophisticated grasp of the politics of identity:

Identity politics has given the scope for the articulation of concerns of ‘invisibility’, ‘marginalization’, ‘representation’, etc. At this point, how do we explore the possibilities of common agenda for advocacy, struggles and campaigns?

Women from many parts of the world questioned language that homogenized experiences and universalized ‘sisterhood’. Can we now explore the possibility of evolving global feminist concerns that accommodate and respect difference and diversity?

These questions posed at the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM are indication that even as we are able to negotiate identities successfully, we are not unaware of the problems that arise from these symbolic exchanges.

As I reported the long list of suggested IAC representations in the closing plenary of the Canadian IWHM for example, there was laughter as well, followed by yet more suggestions for added categories. It was also obvious to everyone that no matter how all inclusive the listing of categories by regions, country, sectors, classes and castes, age groups, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and so on, each individual participant or group of participants would still be tasked with being the voice of millions of others.

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<sup>8</sup> I emphasize the words, “may have started” I studied the proceedings or website pages of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> IWHMs. I have very little data on the other meetings.

Additionally, despite the commitment to the grassroots, the poor and the marginalized, they remain underrepresented as participants in IWHMs. I have tried for years to overcome this problem by attempting to bring more grassroots women to the meetings. But my efforts are often stymied by lack of funding or, when funding is available, the lack of personal documents for passports, bank certificates for visa applications, etc. The more sweeping statements about an increasingly connected world and global community do not take into consideration the systematic bias against the free migration of the poor.

I am not saying that the class, race, heterosexist and other biases of the IWHM process come from external factors alone. All the IWHMs have been marked by tensions along these lines. The tensions become especially intense if the discrimination is attributed to the organizers or to their inability to ensure systems that prevent it from occurring. Without side-stepping the need for accountability, I must note that I have not worked with an IOC that did not have these problems to a smaller or larger extent.

What I am trying to say here is that our attempts at constructing identities succeed for many purposes but there are instances when they do not. Thus, while the capacity to conflate identities “young woman from Vietnam” for example, may be helpful in forming reasonably small IACs, the conflation of “woman from the Third World” with “poor women” must be criticized because it stands in the way of increasing grassroots participation. Similarly despite the a priori assumption that we can build solidarities around the identity, “woman” the IWHMs have not escaped from the sort of scathing debates and divisions, which many feminists decry in patriarchal politics.

A participant of the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM (and a member of its IAC) notes as well that even the concept of “woman”, seemingly the most stable of identities underlying the process has also been interrogated:

Alongside this, is the question of 'Woman', which in the early days of the IWHM was a very untroubled notion. We all 'knew' who women were. But with intersectionality playing a stronger role in our practice and with the very powerful attack on the natural, biological basis of womanhood, attacks that emerged with notions of cultural construction of gender and that have become more complicated with the rise in postmodern thinking, the question about the position of transgender and transsexual people within the space is opened up in a different way. It was addressed in India in a sideways fashion by the presence of the performing group from Malaysia. A small number of conference participants walked out, refused to watch as they weren't 'women' performing, but the majority were only too happy to sit and watch and cheer. This would not, could not have happened with feminism as it was ten years ago. But today, links are being made, not only in the complications of what 'women' are, but also in respect of the alliances being made in relation to sexuality and reproductive justice/rights.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Personal communication, Janet Price.



Indeed, I have added my voice to those of other women involved, who say that IWHMs must begin to tackle issues regarding movement politics. A 28 year process deserves to be self-reflective. Our success at living out the rhetoric of solidarity and finding strength in diversity is the basis for pushing feminist politics further still. It remains important that we theorize this in the light of the resurgence of the international social movements and the continuing marginalization of feminist politics and analysis in this resurgence.

One of the difficulties presented by any attempt at engaging other social movements is that taking simple political positions run contrary to the complexity of this emergent feminist politics.<sup>10</sup> This has a long history in feminism because, for many activists, coming to feminism meant the rejection of the master narrative of class analysis as a basis for political engagement. But the development of even more complex analyses based on several positionalities makes this an even more difficult process. Nonetheless it is crucial that feminists engage. Certain strains in the environmentalist movement for example, have accepted demographic arguments that bolster population control arguments. Religious fundamentalist arguments can become conflated with nationalism to the detriment of women's rights particularly reproductive and sexual rights. In many local as well as transnational settings, the labour movement/s are deeply patriarchal. Nationalist discourses can also mean wars that have devastating effects on women and their children especially because women's bodies can become cultural markers for "the enemy".

I believe that this means that feminists must sharpen their capacity to work on negotiated identities for particular political ends---as long as the scope, time limitation and space limitation of those identities is clearly negotiated. For example Cockburn (2005) talks about how feminist networks against war and militarism like Women in Black reject nationalist identities in order to contest the nationalist projects that frame wars.

To push feminist politics further, it is high time that we assess our struggles and successes in the feminist health movements. I believe our successes happen when we refuse to flatten differences or make binaries or subsume forms and struggles into hierarchical priorities or create singular unities. Feminist politics is at its best when it is enriched by the insights that come from exploring the world of reproduction and sexuality. It is a politics that allows us to be cognizant of the tenuous nature of subjectivity even as we agree to come together as women of differing abilities, ethnicities, classes, castes, ages, nationalities, sexual orientations, marital positions and religions for particular political goals. It is a politics that is grounded on the materiality of our existence, the evanescence of our desires, the multiplicity of our passions and the bedrock of our capacity to make commitments and act.

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<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Janet Price for this insight.

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## Appendix A: Some Notes on the History of the IWHM

(Revised by the author from the original document provided by the Indian Organizing Committee of the 10<sup>th</sup> IWHM entitled, "IWHM-History". Significant inputs from Loes Keyzers and Martha de la Fuente.)

### **1st IWHM - 1977**

Rome

In 1977 women from Europe involved in the abortion campaign and broader issues of women's health came together in Rome, which in retrospect was called the 1<sup>st</sup> IWHM.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> IWHM - 1980**

Hanover

### **3<sup>rd</sup> IWHM - June 6-8, 1981**

Geneva

500 women from 35 countries

**Host Organizations:** ISIS and the Dispensaire des Femmes

**Organizing Committee:** Helene Bregani, Jane Cottingham, Rosangela Gramoni, Dina Leveille, Rina Nissim, Patricia Schulz.

### **Workshop Topics:**

1. Health Poverty and Racism
2. The Role of Paramedics
3. Abortion
4. Imperialism and Population Control
5. Sexuality
6. Contraception
7. Pregnancy and Childbirth
8. Breastfeeding and Nutrition
9. Women and Madness
10. Women's Research into Natural Medicine
11. Menopause, Lesbian Health, Dental Self-Help
12. "Women from the Third World",
13. International Information, Documentation and Networks
14. Yoga as a Method of Contraception and Abortion
15. Women and Violence,

### **4<sup>th</sup> IWHM - 1984**

Holland, Amsterdam

Almost 499 women from 65 countries.

**Theme:** *'No to Population Control, Women Decide'*

This meeting was organized in the form of a tribunal.  
Many issues were discussed and positions taken on:

1. Contraception, abortion and sterilization: the slogan was: "our bodies, our lives, our right to decide"
2. Drugs, a multinational issue.
3. Sexual politics, from different groups, Muslim, lesbian, women with children.
4. Population control or women's control, from different countries.
5. Women and disability
6. Racism

**Host Organization:** ICASC and Platform Population Politic in The Netherlands.

ICASC is the FORERUNNER OF Women's Global Network on Reproductive Rights; WGNRR was 'born' at this 4th IWHM.

**5<sup>th</sup> IWHM -23<sup>rd</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> May 1987**

Costa Rica

**Host Organization:** CEFEMINA.

This was attended by about 800 women. Only 350 at the meeting came from 70-80 countries while the rest were from Costa Rica.

This was the 1<sup>st</sup> international meeting where a number of networks present also had separate meetings, both before and after the main meeting e.g. Infant baby Food Action Network and others.

**6<sup>th</sup> IWHM - Nov 3-9,1990**

Quezon City - Philippines

**Theme:** *In Search Of Balanced Perspectives And Global Solidarity For Women's Health And Reproductive Rights*

This theme was decided because need to promote the perspectives of 3<sup>rd</sup> world women in the international women's health movement.

**Host Organizations:**

1. Center for Women's Resources (CWR)

*Transnationalization of Solidarities and Women Movements*  
*Transnationalisation des solidarités et mouvements des femmes*

2. GABRIELA
3. Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina (KABAPA)
4. PILIPINA
5. Samahang ng Malayang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa (SAMAKANA)
6. WOMANHEALTH, Philippines
7. Women's Resource and Women's Resource and Research Center (WRRC)

**Organizing Committee:** La-Rainne Abad Sarmiento, Leovigilda N Agustin, Dolores De Quiros Castillo, Trinidad Domingo, Sylvia Estrada-Claudio, Mercy Fabros, Josefa S. Francisco, Reena Marcelo, Ana Maria R. Nemenzo, Rosario T. Padilla, Nora Protacio, Perla B. Sanchez.

**Main plenary themes:** Women's Health and Development, Women's Health and Reproductive Rights, Violence (Militarism, Religious, Institutional) Against Women, Sexuality

**7<sup>th</sup> IWHM - September 12-18, 1993**  
Kampala Uganda

**Theme:** *United we stand to solve the Global Problem of Women's Health and Reproductive rights*

**Host Organization:** Safe Motherhood Board of the Uganda National Council of Women

**Sub Themes:**

1. Addressing culture and religious obstacles to improve health practices
2. Generating broader political support and understanding for women's causes
3. Integrating women's perspective and priorities more fully into government and donor funded health population
4. Encouraging and supporting women on efforts to improve their health and well being
5. Ensuring adequate attention to often neglected health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases, cancer, violence against women's health after menopause
6. Broadening the linkages b/w child survival and family planning programmes
7. Increasing women's input into the development and dissemination of reproductive and health terminologies
8. protect women against AIDS
9. Coping with causes and consequences of unwanted pregnancies.

**8<sup>th</sup> IWHM- March 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> 1997**  
Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

**Theme:** *'Women's Health, Poverty and Quality of Life'*

The theme was ensured discussed in light of gender, race and social class approaches.

**Host Organizations:**

1. National Feminist Network for Health and Reproductive Rights
2. Coletivo Feminista Sexualidade e Saude
3. Geledes - Instituto da Mulher Negra
4. SOF - Sempre Viva Organizacao Feminista
5. UBM - Uniao Brasileira de Mulheres
6. Casa da Mulher do Grajau
7. Casa da Mulher Lilith
8. CIM Centro de Informacao Mulher
9. Nucleo de Estudos e Pesquisa sobre a Saude da Mulher/ Universidade Federal de Sao Paulo
10. Nucleo de Estudos e Pesquisa - AIDS - Universidade de Sao Paulo

**9<sup>th</sup> IWHM - August 12-16, 2002**

Toronto, Canada

**Host Organizations:** Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Center.

**Themes:**

1. Women's Reproductive Rights,
2. The Impact of Violence (State and family) on Women's Health
3. The impact of the environment (natural and built) on Women's Health

**10<sup>th</sup> IWHM:** September 21-25, 2005

**New Delhi, India**

**Theme: Health Rights, Women's Lives:  
Challenges and Strategies for Movement Building**

**Organizing Committee:** Manisha Gupte, Padmini Swaminathan, Sarojini N.B., Sabala, Renu Khanna, Philomena Vincent, Lakshmi Lingam, Amar Jesani, Monisha Behal.

**Focal Themes:**

1. Public Health, Health Sector Reforms and
2. Reproductive and Sexual Health
3. The Politics and Resurgence of Population Policies
4. Women's Rights and Medical Technologies
5. Violence (of state, militarism, family and "development") and Women's Health

# **MARCHE MONDIALE DES FEMMES ET CONSTRUCTION D'UN MOUVEMENT FÉMINISTE EUROPÉEN (2000-2005): LES ENJEUX EUROPÉENS D' ACTIONS COLLECTIVES TRANSNATIONALES**

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L'Union européenne (UE) et son mode de gouvernance «corporatiste-libéral» (Balme et Chabanet, 2002 :112) incite les acteurs de la société civile organisée (syndicats, patronat, associations, mouvements sociaux) à créer des structures à l'échelle européenne. Dans cette logique, en 1990, l'UE donne l'impulsion pour la création du Lobby européen des femmes (LEF), et accrédite cet organisme, censé être représentatif de l'ensemble des forces féminines et féministes en Europe (Mazey, 2002). En réalité, ce lobby représente surtout de grandes fédérations féminines. Il assume plutôt une fonction d'interlocuteur pour les institutions que de porte-parole des groupes de base, auprès desquels il joue un rôle d'avertisseur (travail de surveillance juridique de l'UE) et auxquels il a recours pour lancer ses campagnes (Giraud, 2005). Dans les années quatre-vingt-dix, les principaux thèmes abordés au niveau européen concernent la participation des femmes à la vie politique et l'intégration des femmes au marché du travail (Hoskyns, 1996). Ils sont entièrement reliés aux problématiques posées par les institutions de l'UE spécialisées sur les questions d'égalité des chances. On ne peut pas considérer qu'à travers le LEF prendrait vie un véritable mouvement féministe européen.

D'autre part, à l'occasion de la quatrième conférence de l'ONU sur les femmes, en 1995, de nombreux groupes féministes de base se retrouvent à Beijing, au forum parallèle des ONG. Cette manifestation est la plus importante de toutes celles qui ont accompagné les conférences onusiennes. Les féministes occidentales établissent le constat de l'élargissement aux pays développés des problématiques de la pauvreté et des violences déjà présentes dans les mobilisations des femmes du Sud (Sen et Grown, 1992) dont les revendications sont d'ors et déjà portées par des ONG transnationales (Keck et Sikkink, 1998). Certaines reviennent en Europe avec la volonté de se mobiliser sur ces thèmes dans leurs pays, ce que font par exemple les Françaises en novembre 1997, dans une manifestation contre la précarité et le temps partiel, pour une réduction massive du temps de travail. Ainsi, lorsqu'à l'été 1997, Françoise David, présidente de la Fédération des femmes du Québec, se lance dans une tournée européenne des associations féminines et féministes, afin de rallier des femmes de ce continent au projet d'organisation d'une Marche mondiale des femmes (MMF), son idée représente une double opportunité, pour de nombreuses militantes de base : relier leurs mobilisations futures avec celles d'autres femmes dans le monde, et construire un mouvement des femmes à l'échelle européenne, à l'image des autres mouvements sociaux, en particulier du mouvement syndical, qui au fil des ans a acquis une légitimité réelle comme partenaire de l'Union européenne.

Si l'on considère la théorie des mouvements sociaux transnationaux dans le courant principal de la sociologie politique américaine, ce phénomène empirique soulève plusieurs contradictions. Tout d'abord, la théorie des opportunités politiques incite à accorder aux institutions



internationales ou supranationales, comme l'UE, un rôle moteur dans l'émergence de mouvements sociaux transnationaux, soit directement de par leur présence (Tarrow, 2001), soit indirectement, par les attentes d'un effet « boomrang » sur les États nationaux (Keck et Sikkink, 1998). Or, dans le cas européen de la Marche mondiale des femmes, l'absence de mouvement féministe européen, malgré les incitations de l'UE tout au long des années quatre-vingt-dix, ne permet pas de conclure à l'incidence première de ce facteur sur l'organisation de la marche européenne. Les motivations proviennent avant tout de cette proposition québécoise de transnationalisation des solidarités, avant laquelle les militantes des groupes de base européens n'osaient pas s'imaginer trouver les ressources pour une organisation à cette échelle. L'existence d'institutions européennes n'a contribué qu'à posteriori, à motiver l'entrée d'un nombre de plus en plus important de groupes de base dans le projet de Marche mondiale des femmes. De même, l'idée qu'une mobilisation à l'échelle européenne aurait plus d'effet sur les politiques des États nationaux, a plutôt représenté un argument légitimant les actions, qu'une stratégie préalable.

En outre, les spécialistes du mouvement altermondialiste ont constaté que ce mouvement dans les années deux mille s'orientait vers une « politics from below » et une redéfinition du politique par la recherche d'espaces publics autonomes. Ils ont estimé que ce phénomène relevait d'une adaptation stratégique des mouvements transnationaux à leur environnement (nouvelles possibilités technologiques) et à la fermeture des opportunités politiques, tant dans l'accès des citoyens aux institutions que dans le soutien des partis politiques de gauche (Della Porta et Tarrow, 2005 : 13). Il faut reconnaître que le bilan sur la construction de ce mouvement féministe européen est plus que mitigé : à l'automne 2004, la commission européenne refuse à la MMF le financement d'un poste pour l'organisation des marches de 2005 autour de la Charte mondiale des femmes pour l'humanité. La Commission s'obstine à ne reconnaître que le Lobby européen des femmes et ferme les opportunités institutionnelles au mouvement. Ainsi, sur un plan organisationnel, priment la décentralisation et la faible structuration du mouvement. De surcroît, à la faiblesse des ressources financières et organisationnelles s'ajoutent de faibles capacités de mobilisation et un black-out médiatique qui atteste du peu d'intérêt et de légitimité accordé au féminisme militant de base en Europe. Organisé le week-end du référendum français sur le Traité de constitution européenne, le rassemblement féministe européen de Marseille passe complètement inaperçu dans l'actualité et les médias. De 35 000 femmes mobilisées en 2000, on passe à 12 000 marcheuses à Marseille en 2005.

Ainsi, plusieurs éléments indiquent que la MMF au niveau européen s'inscrit aussi dans ce mouvement de repli sur une « politique par le bas » dans un environnement politique hostile. Tandis qu'en 2000, une commissaire européenne était rencontrée par des déléguées, que des représentantes de la Marche étaient allées déposer leurs revendications à leurs élus nationaux et européens, en 2005, aucune interpellation directe des personnalités n'est organisée. Tandis qu'en 2000, une véritable plateforme européenne est écrite et diffusée un peu partout, en 2005, la Charte mondiale des femmes pour l'humanité est vaguement présentée aux militantes elles-mêmes, sans aucun aménagement spécifique pour l'Europe. La baisse des attentes en matière de résultats politiques semble renvoyer sur des répertoires d'action collective tournés vers l'interne, vers les autres femmes de la société civile organisée (partis politiques, syndicats, autres mouvements sociaux) et vers la construction de réseaux thématiques européens. En effet, tandis qu'en 2000, les militantes des divers pays européens ne se connaissent pas, ne travaillent pas ensemble et n'ont pas de réseaux réels, en 2005, les contacts s'inscrivent plus dans la durée, les

femmes des syndicats sont beaucoup plus présentes, les informations circulent entre pays sur divers thèmes et les marches relais représentent des occasions d'organiser des festivités communes entre pays.

Toutefois, la stratégie politique de *glocalisation*, c'est-à-dire "politics based on universal values of solidarity that transcend the nation state and link the local, regional, national and global levels in a supportive way, as well as a vision of social and democratic sustainable development" (Andersen et Siim, 2004: 4), plutôt dirigée vers les acteurs de la société civile organisée et les réseaux transnationaux, est présente dès le départ dans la MMF (Giraud, 2001). Elle n'est pas nouvelle et ne relève pas vraiment un « réajustement », mais plutôt d'une accentuation par rapport à la politique institutionnelle, présente simultanément. Elle repose sur une sorte d'injonction morale à la solidarité internationale, sur l'idée séduisante de bâtir une société civile mondiale et des espaces de réflexion citoyenne dans un contexte de mondialisation (Held, 2000). La MMF a toujours pris pour répertoire d'action collective principal l'éducation populaire à la base et dans les autres mouvements sociaux, l'échange démocratique d'idées et de principes politiques. D'ailleurs, elle repose partout dans le monde (plus de 6000 groupes dans 159 pays) et en particulier en Europe et en Amérique du Nord, sur des mouvements féministes qui pratiquent depuis les années soixante-dix un travail de conscientisation et de « grassroots politics ». En outre, même lorsque la stratégie de *glocalisation* semble primer plus que l'interpellation des institutions, la volonté d'influencer les acteurs institutionnels et de leur présenter des discours politiques alternatifs demeure fortement présente comme stratégie politique du mouvement. En Europe, les exemples de politiques envers les femmes de certains pays (par exemple la loi-cadre espagnole sur les violences faites aux femmes de décembre 2004) sont brandis comme des modèles, attendus par les féministes des autres pays. Par ailleurs, les féministes se sont fortement mobilisées autour du Traité de constitution européenne pour qu'il intègre l'égalité hommes femmes dans les valeurs de l'Union. Comment alors expliquer, malgré tout, le glissement d'une politique ambitieuse de construction d'un mouvement féministe européen reconnu par les institutions politiques vers une politique beaucoup plus modeste de consolidation de réseaux transversaux et de pratiques locales et autonomes de solidarité ?

Nous avons rencontré une dizaine de responsables européennes, principalement dans les pays francophones, France, Belgique et Suisse à diverses périodes (2000, 2004, 2005, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. Nous avons également réalisé une observation participante à l'Assemblée des femmes lors du Forum

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<sup>1</sup> Liste des entretiens réalisés:

Maria Casares, Marche mondiale des femmes Suisse, Genève, le 3 avril 2006

Poupette Choque, Le monde selon les femmes, Bruxelles, le 2 mars 2006

Monique Dental, réseau Ruptures, Paris, le 14 décembre 2004

Nelly Martin, SUD-PTT, responsable de la Marche Mondiale, Paris, le 10 septembre 2004

Judith Martin-Razi, coordinatrice et Nicole Thuet, présidente du Collectif 13- Marseille, Marseille, le 31 août 2004

Joelle Palmieri, Les Pénélopes, Paris, le 9 septembre 2004

Susie Rojzman, coordonatrice MMF France, Paris, 6 juillet 2000

Christine Weckx, Vie féminine, Bruxelles, le 3 mars 2006

Participation à l'Assemblée européenne des femmes, Bobigny, le 12 novembre 2003 et au FSE Paris-Saint-Denis, du 13 au 15 novembre 2003.

Micro-trottoir pendant la marche relais de Marseille, les 28 et 29 mai 2005

social européen de Paris Saint-Denis en novembre 2003, ainsi que des interviews au hasard le long du cortège de la marche à Marseille en mai 2005. Les données empiriques recueillies nous incitent à reconsidérer le rôle des opportunités politiques dans ce passage d'une politique plus tournée vers l'enjeu institutionnel européen à une politique plus orientée vers la construction de réseaux thématiques transnationaux et des pratiques de solidarités bi-latérales. Nous ferons l'hypothèse que ce repli relève sans doute moins de réorientations stratégiques rationnelles liées aux institutions que d'un effet combiné, sur la forme des mobilisations, de trois facteurs :

- le déclin des ressources humaines et financières suite aux marches de 2000 ;
- les limites de la légitimité et de la reconnaissance des féministes dans leur environnement militant (syndicats, partis politiques de gauche, mouvement altermondialiste) ;
- les tensions théoriques et analytiques internes aux mouvements féministes européens.

Notre présentation sous forme chronologique, s'articule autour des trois enjeux, institutionnel, revendicatif, et identitaire et tente de restituer l'influence des relations de solidarité et de la construction des revendications dans la prépondérance, variable au fil du temps, de ces divers enjeux dans la construction d'un mouvement féministe européen.

## **I. Construire un mouvement féministe européen**

« Nous femmes d'Europe marcherons en solidarité avec les revendications des femmes des pays les plus pauvres. Cette marche sera un pas en avant vers le développement de réseaux de femmes qui constitueront un contre-pouvoir et se feront entendre des instances européennes et des gouvernements de chaque pays » (Martin-Razi et coll., 2001 : 8)

Le préambule de la plateforme de revendication européenne affiche clairement un objectif politique : créer un contre-pouvoir pour se faire entendre des institutions. Les deux dimensions, d'interpellation des institutions et de création de réseaux transnationaux sont présentes simultanément, l'enjeu organisationnel conditionnant l'enjeu institutionnel. L'organisation d'une marche européenne représente un défi à des militantes de divers pays qui n'ont pas l'habitude de se côtoyer. Nous montrons que ce n'est pas tant l'existence de l'Union européenne et ses ressources potentielles que l'impulsion québécoise qui s'avère primordiale dans les premières étapes de l'organisation européenne d'un mouvement à cette échelle.

### **A. Les étapes de l'organisation européenne**

Le féminisme en Europe connaît un renouveau dans les années quatre-vingt-dix généralement attribué à la montée de menaces pesant sur les droits acquis par les féministes dans le courant des années soixante-dix (Picq, 2002) : « backlash » sur l'avortement, précarisation du travail avec le développement du temps partiel contraint, paupérisation des femmes suite aux divorces, faibles avancées des femmes dans les postes de responsabilité dans l'entreprise et dans la vie politique. La quatrième Conférence mondiale sur les femmes, à Beijing, en 1995, met en lumière le rapprochement de ces conditions de vie des femmes des pays développés avec la situation des

femmes du Sud, qui dénoncent depuis dix ans que les politiques économiques du Nord envers le Sud, les programmes d'ajustement structurel, et la mise en œuvre de l'idéologie libérale les maintiennent dans une situation de pauvreté et de domination (Sen et Grown, 1992). C'est au même moment qu'en Europe, les Françaises, les Belges commencent à reconstituer des collectifs. En France, une kyrielle de femmes d'associations féministes, d'action sociale ou d'ONG mixtes, de syndicats et de partis politiques de gauche se regroupent, d'abord derrière la Coordination pour la défense du droit à l'avortement et la contraception (CADAC) pour la défense du droit à l'avortement et à la contraception (manifestation du 25 novembre 1995) puis fondent ensemble le Collectif national pour les droits des femmes (janvier 1996). Les Assises nationales pour les droits des femmes en mars 1997 représentent le premier rassemblement de ces militantes pour mettre en place une plate-forme commune de revendications. En novembre 1997, elles organisent une grande manifestation unitaire contre le temps partiel. Le 15 janvier 2000, pour les 25 ans de la loi Veil sur l'avortement, après le défilé dans les rues de Paris, elles rencontrent la ministre des Affaires sociales Martine Aubry, qui fait toute une série de promesses. De même en Belgique, en 1998, est créé le Comité du 8 mars, premier regroupement des féministes francophones et flamandes depuis les années soixante-dix. Comme les Françaises, elles s'inquiètent de la montée du néo-libéralisme et s'adressent à leur gouvernement pour faire avancer l'agenda onusien, la mise en œuvre réelle de la plateforme de Beijing. On retrouve ce même phénomène en Suisse, où le Collectif 14 juin s'est formé en automne 1990 pour préparer la journée de la grève des femmes et qui fonctionne, depuis, comme un collectif d'associations féminines et féministes, de syndicats, de partis politiques et de femmes individuelles. Ainsi que le souligne Maria Casares, ce collectif, qui se trouve à l'origine de la participation de la Suisse à la MMF, s'est donné les moyens d'une certaine radicalité politique, à l'extrême-gauche (Maria Casares, Genève, le 3 avril 2006).

Malgré l'existence de l'Union européenne, malgré la tentative, en 1983, à l'initiative du Centre de recherche européen sur les femmes (CREW) de représenter le « féminisme autonome » à travers le réseau européen des femmes (ENOW), censé regrouper des groupes de base, (Hoskyns, 1996 :130), malgré la création du Lobby européen des femmes en 1990, qui aurait dû, en théorie, faciliter le regroupement des féministes de toutes tendances au niveau européen, ces militantes de base qui s'organisent entre 1995 et 2000 pour la défense des droits des femmes dans leur pays ne se côtoient pas. C'est pourquoi Françoise David, présidente de la Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ), à la recherche de soutien au projet d'organiser une Marche mondiale des femmes, organise une véritable tournée européenne des groupes de femmes (1997). Pays par pays, elle vient expliquer l'idée de la Marche, au Collectif national droits des femmes en France, au Comité 8 mars en Belgique, à des groupes éparses en Italie, etc. Comme le souligne la française Susie Rojzman, membre du Collectif féministe contre le viol, responsable de la section violences du Collectif national droits des femmes et désignée en 2000 comme membre du Comité de liaison international de la MMF, le projet de Françoise David recoupe l'analyse et le discours contre la forme néolibérale de la mondialisation que les Françaises sont en train de construire :

Françoise David est venue en France, on a fait des réunions pour voir si le projet séduisait. Personnellement, j'ai trouvé l'idée très bonne, dans un phénomène de mondialisation néolibérale, il faut une riposte féministe à la mondialisation. (Susie Rojzman, Paris, le 6 juillet 2000)

Le projet séduit et des représentantes française, belge, suisse, mais aussi anglaises ou polonaises, font partie des 140 déléguées de 65 pays du monde qui participent du 16 au 18 octobre 1998 à la rencontre internationale préparatoire à la Marche mondiale des femmes en l'an 2000. Selon nos interlocutrices, c'est lors de cette rencontre que des Européennes (surtout Belges, Françaises et Suisses) envisagent de créer une coordination à l'échelle de leur continent et d'écrire une plateforme commune. Cette plateforme ira au-delà des revendications de la plateforme mondiale, pour laquelle les féministes européennes ont le sentiment d'avoir eu à faire des concessions, en particulier sur l'avortement et sur les droits des lesbiennes, qui ôtent au texte une part de sa dimension féministe. Il faut ajouter que, même si nous pouvons attribuer un rôle moteur à l'impulsion québécoise dans la création d'une coordination européenne pour la MMF, les leaders qui s'engagent dans la voie d'une coordination régionale ne font que réactiver un vieux leitmotiv de la tendance « lutte de classes » des mouvements des femmes. Du 28 au 30 mai 1977, cette tendance du mouvement français réunit à Vincennes près de 5000 femmes d'Europe. La rencontre repose sur une réflexion concernant la stratégie à adopter pour construire un mouvement politique autonome, avec l'idée que cette construction passe par une politique de visibilité de la dimension internationale des luttes des femmes, « qui pourrait être concrétisée par la mise en place d'une sorte de coordination internationale permanente » (*La revue d'en face*, 1977 : 47) et par des alliances avec les femmes des syndicats et des partis politiques de gauche (Giraud, 2005). Ainsi, dans l'histoire même du féminisme européen se trouve déjà en germe la coordination de 2000 et les questions émergentes sur le ralliement des femmes du mouvement altermondialiste, des syndicats et des partis politiques de gauche.

Sur un plan organisationnel, quatre réunions européennes seront nécessaires –principalement entre féministes francophones, avant le lancement de la marche le 8 mars 2000, à Genève, pour mettre au point une plateforme européenne de revendications qui rallie rapidement des féministes allemandes et espagnoles (Martin-Razi et coll., 2001). En 2000, ces cinq nationalités sont les mieux représentées lors de la manifestation européenne de Bruxelles, le 14 octobre, avec également des cortèges du Portugal, d'Italie, des Pays-Bas, de Grèce, du pays basque. Les pays d'Europe dont l'absence est la plus remarquable sont la Grande-Bretagne, les pays scandinaves, les pays de l'Est (Nelly Martin, Paris, le 10 septembre 2004). Les organisatrices sont fières d'être parvenues à organiser ce qu'elles considèrent comme la première manifestation européenne féministe :

« Nous avons pour la première fois réussi une manifestation européenne féministe, et donc, nous avons mis un premier jalon à la constitution d'une force européenne féministe, force dont nous avons crucialement besoin alors que l'Union européenne se livre à des mauvais coups » (Martin-Razi et coll., 2001 : 5)

Comme le montre le bilan du Guide national français sur la marche mondiale des femmes 2000, la création d'une coordination européenne est vécue comme une première étape dans la construction d'un mouvement féministe à l'échelle européenne. Mais cette coordination demeure un peu floue sur ses contours et ses objectifs : d'un côté, la conception de l'Europe prônée par les féministes est beaucoup plus large que l'Union européenne ; elle intègre la Suisse et l'ensemble des pays de l'Est. De surcroît, la MMF reconnaît à des régions d'Europe un statut

autonome – tel est le cas du pays basque, de la Galice en Espagne, qui ne correspond pas à une réalité nationale. Malgré tout, la plateforme européenne s'adresse assez directement à l'Union européenne et la MMF se veut une force d'interpellation et de pression sur ses institutions, ce qui pose la question du levier institutionnel pour ces pays qui ne sont pas membres de l'UE ou pour les régions qui ne sont pas directement représentées.

## **B. La coordination européenne et les enjeux institutionnels**

Le pouvoir politique grandissant de l'Union européenne sur les États qui la composent, le principe de subsidiarité qui s'applique entre le droit européen et le droit national, le développement de programmes dans des domaines de plus en plus variés, bien au-delà de l'organisation du marché économique, programmes qui en appellent à des partenariats entre pays, et enfin, l'organisation même de la représentation politique de la société civile organisée au niveau européen, via l'accréditation de fédérations et regroupements européens, posent aux féministes un défi organisationnel et institutionnel. Ce niveau de gouvernance devient tout aussi incontournable que le niveau national pour l'ensemble des mouvements sociaux. Ainsi, l'organisation d'un mouvement à l'échelle européenne se nourrit du sentiment qu'agir sur ces institutions non seulement peut avoir des retombées sur les États nationaux, mais encore relève d'un enjeu de citoyenneté, propre à cette échelle.

Sur le plan du contenu, la plateforme européenne se distingue de la plateforme mondiale en déclinant quatre thèmes de revendications majeures, le premier étant : « pour une Europe solidaire, démocratique et ouverte », un thème politique qui traduit les inquiétudes soulevées par la forme économique que prend l'approfondissement du projet d'intégration européenne (symbolisée par le passage à la monnaie unique dans six pays en 2001). Les militantes aspirent à une politique européenne de solidarité envers les pays en développement qui tiendrait compte de l'égalité hommes-femmes, à une Europe qui élargit la citoyenneté par une « égale représentation des femmes et des hommes dans la vie politique, économique, sociale et culturelle » (Martin-Razi et coll., 2001: 8). Vient ensuite la pauvreté, puis le thème central pour les féministes européennes, « Pour le droit des femmes à disposer de leur corps et à choisir leur mode de vie, leur sexualité et leur orientation sexuelle ». Les violences se trouvent dans une quatrième partie. Le 14 octobre 2000, au moment de la Marche européenne qui rassemble près de 35 000 manifestants-es à Bruxelles, une délégation européenne de la MMF (des déléguées du Portugal, Italie, Allemagne, Suède, Suisse, Belgique, France) est reçue par Anna Diamantopoulou, commissaire européenne en charge des droits des femmes.

La plateforme européenne est aménagée par chaque coordination nationale et, tout au long de l'année 2000, les marcheuses s'adressent à leurs gouvernements respectifs de manière variée, dépendante des pratiques institutionnelles déjà instaurées avec leurs gouvernements, parfois en présentant d'un bloc leurs revendications (par exemple en Suisse, au Luxembourg), parfois en rencontrant des « féministes d'Etat », comme par exemple en Belgique, où sont instaurés des contacts réguliers avec le gouvernement. Toutefois, le répertoire d'action collective de la MMF incite les militantes à considérer les divers niveaux de gouvernance comme des poupées russes. De fait, elles s'adressent également à leurs institutions régionales, comme par exemple à Marseille (France), où une délégation des Amies de la Marche présente une plate-forme

régionale au Conseil régional de Provence- Alpes Côte d'Azur (Judith Martin-Razi, Marseille, le 31 août 2004). Enfin, les Européennes s'adressent aussi au niveau international. La Marche en Europe est lancée le 8 mars 2000 à Genève, où une délégation est invitée par l'ONU dans le cadre de la journée internationale des femmes. Cinq mille manifestantes se rassemblent Place des Nations et des femmes d'une vingtaine de pays d'Europe ouvrent un cortège qui s'arrête devant le Haut Commissariat pour les Réfugiés, afin de revendiquer le droit d'asile pour les femmes victimes de viol, de violence et de persécution et devant l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce, symbolisée par un énorme vampire. (MMF, *Bulletin de liaison*, mars 2000).

Finalement, le bilan des marches de 2000 est relativement mitigé : côté mobilisation des ressources, au niveau européen, 25 à 35 000 manifestantes pour une région de près de 375 millions d'habitants, c'est peu, même s'il s'agit d'une première européenne, et les organisatrices déplorent le manque de mobilisation des associations mixtes et des syndicats. En outre, la faible couverture médiatique de l'événement, la manifestation bruxelloise ayant été confinée dans des quartiers d'affaire déserts en fin de semaine, ainsi que le peu de retombées politiques, paraissent décourageants. En effet, la commissaire européenne qui reçoit les marcheuses n'a d'autre réponse à offrir, à la longue liste de revendications, que l'existence d'une directive en préparation contre la discrimination sur le lieu de travail en raison du sexe, de l'âge, des handicaps, de l'orientation sexuelle (Rojtman, 2000). Sur le plan national, les résultats sont contrastés : en Belgique, la chambre des représentants s'engage en juin 2000 à prendre des initiatives législatives pour concrétiser les revendications de la MMF. Par la suite, pour relancer les parlementaires sur leurs engagements, les féministes organisent, le 8 mars 2002, un Parlement international des femmes, autour des thèmes de la violence et de la pauvreté, qui se réunit à la Chambre des représentants de Bruxelles. Elles obtiennent alors une loi sur les violences (qui toutefois connaît des déficits d'application en 2005), l'inscription de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes dans la Constitution (article 10), l'exigence de représentation des deux sexes dans tous les parlements régionaux (article 11), la loi sur la parité électorale et la création de l'Institut de l'égalité hommes/femmes en 2002. À noter que cette dynamique interne en Belgique se nourrit également du conflit identitaire entre Wallons et Flamands. La capacité des femmes des deux groupes sociolinguistiques à se coordonner pour des actions communes, ce que la MMF a permis de faire concrètement, joue sans doute sur l'accueil favorable fait à leurs demandes – en amont du recours à des mobilisations transnationales.

De même en Suisse, les résultats sont plutôt satisfaisants. Sur Genève, le Collectif 14 juin, plutôt d'extrême gauche, parvient, en créant l'association Marche mondiale des femmes, à rallier des groupes et des coalitions féminines de manière beaucoup plus large. En outre, une structure nationale fédère les diverses associations « marche mondiale » créées dans les cantons. De ce fait, les féministes se font connaître de la population. Les événements organisés à Genève pour le lancement de la Marche en Europe, le 8 mars 2000, remportent un certain succès médiatique. Après 2000, la coalition suisse pour le droit à l'avortement, avec le soutien de la MMF, gagne le référendum sur la libéralisation du droit à l'avortement (mai 2002). En outre, la Marche soutient, en tant que partenaire et espace de diffusion des revendications, diverses coalitions ou comités régionaux déjà actifs sur des projets précis : après 2000, les féministes remportent des victoires comme les budgets pour les Planning familiaux, un changement constitutionnel concernant le congé maternité (2004), une révision de l'assurance vieillesse discriminante pour les femmes, une loi sur les violences et l'ouverture d'un centre d'accueil pour femmes battues dans le canton de Genève. Ces succès aux niveaux national et cantonal renforcent les féministes suisses dans la

conviction que la transnationalisation des solidarités confère un supplément de pouvoir politique aux groupes de femmes dans les batailles locales, supplément qu'elles relient toutefois à la diffusion de leurs analyses et revendications auprès des autres acteurs du mouvement social et des partis politiques de gauche (Maria Casares, Genève, le 3 avril 2006).

En France en revanche, le 17 juin 2000, des déléguées de la Marche, qui a rassemblé environ 15 000 personnes à Paris, sont juste accueillies par les conseillères de la secrétaire d'Etat aux droits des femmes. Elles ressortent déçues du peu d'intérêt porté par le gouvernement socialiste à leur mobilisation qui s'inscrit dans un mouvement transnational, surtout dans ce contexte assez favorable, en termes de structure d'opportunités politiques, où le Collectif national droit des femmes tend à être le seul interlocuteur féministe reconnu (Giraud, 2005), et où le gouvernement peut être considéré comme un allié, puisque le Parti Socialiste est membre du Collectif. Les féministes françaises déplorent aussi que les médias français aient préféré demeurer indifférents à la nouveauté que représentait ce phénomène de transnationalisation des solidarités féminines et féministes.

Ainsi, la disparité et la faiblesse des résultats au niveau européen nous incitent à modérer l'idée d'effet « boomrang » des mobilisations transnationales des femmes en Europe. Ces effets semblent dépendre avant tout des modes de régulation nationaux de la représentation politique : la Suisse – tout comme la Belgique, ont développé des pratiques d'institutionnalisation des mouvements sociaux (Giugni et Passy, 1998). Les mobilisations dans le cadre de la MMF profitent de ce mode de régulation. En revanche, la France peine à intégrer les acteurs de la société civile dans la prise de décision et ce mode de régulation freine l'écoute des dirigeants, même s'ils constituent des alliés politiques (Giraud, 2005). Finalement, si l'on suit la théorie de Sidney Tarrow, la faiblesse des résultats politiques au niveau européen et les disparités nationales devraient plutôt créer des conflits internes et décourager les militantes à persister dans l'organisation d'un mouvement à cette échelle. Pourtant, et malgré les difficultés entre 2000 et 2005, elles persistent dans la tentative de construire un mouvement féministe européen.

## II. L'émergence de difficultés dans l'entre deux marches

Les chercheurs qui travaillent sur le mouvement altermondialiste ont suggéré que l'orientation des répertoires d'action collective dans le sens d'une « politique par le bas » relèverait d'un ajustement stratégique devant les limites d'intégration par les démocraties de discours dissidents (Della Porta et Tarrow, 2005). Toutefois, dans le cas de la MMF-Europe, nous pouvons difficilement attribuer à une réorientation stratégique le renforcement, en 2005, de la politique de *glocalisation* par rapport à la politique dirigée vers les institutions. D'une part, nous l'avons vu, certains gouvernements ont été à l'écoute des marcheuses en 2000 et il y a, au contraire, en 2005, l'espoir de voir instaurées dans d'autres pays européens des mesures exemplaires. Nous pensons en particulier à la loi-cadre espagnole de décembre 2004 que les Françaises brandissent comme modèle et réclament à leur gouvernement. Les difficultés rencontrées par la MMF-Europe, qui peuvent expliquer le repli sur une ambition plus modeste que la création d'un grand mouvement féministe européen, reposent moins sur des déceptions politiques que sur des obstacles d'ordre organisationnel, relationnel et idéologique.



## A. Le déclin des ressources humaines et financières de la MMF-Europe

La principale difficulté posée au lendemain des manifestations de 2000 est d'ordre organisationnel. La coordination européenne – et certaines coordinations nationales comme en France, n'ont plus de financement ni de personnes qui se chargent du travail. Ce problème organisationnel est en grande partie lié au rapport toujours ambigu des féministes envers le pouvoir et l'argent. La crainte de voir s'instaurer des relations de pouvoir à l'interne conduit à des pratiques politiques relativement peu efficaces sur un plan organisationnel. Ainsi, la coordination européenne de la Marche de 2000 n'a plus de financement après les événements. Les deux organisatrices belges étaient soutenues financièrement par un budget réclamé spécifiquement pour cet événement. Ce phénomène se reproduit en 2005 et la coordination nationale belge disparaît de nouveau en décembre. Ainsi que le souligne Nelly Martin, coordonnatrice pour la France, cette pratique politique est plutôt contre-productive pour l'entretien des relations européennes et la continuité du mouvement :

Jusqu'ici, la coordination européenne était une coordination de chaque pays, il n'y avait pas de secrétariat, il n'y avait rien, une coordination et tous les trois quatre mois on se réunissait et c'est le pays qui invitait qui payait les frais. Il se débrouillait pour avoir de l'argent, chaque pays faisait comme ça. Maintenant, c'est vrai qu'on est arrivé un peu au bout des possibilités financières des copines, qui en ont marre de payer, qui sont les mêmes, tu vois et donc ça devient difficile mais dans le mouvement des femmes ... on n'aime pas tellement créer des structures, il y a une espèce de défiance par rapport à des copines qui prendraient le pouvoir, qui prendraient l'argent. (Nelly Martin, Paris, le 10 septembre 2004)

Le problème du financement d'un mouvement à l'échelle européenne pose de manière accrue non seulement la question des relations avec les institutions, mais aussi de celle avec les partis politiques et les syndicats. Début octobre 2004, à Bruxelles, le problème du financement se trouve au centre des débats de la réunion de préparation des événements de 2005, ce qui atteste d'un besoin d'institutionnalisation de la structure du mouvement européen afin d'organiser des actions à l'échelle européenne. D'un côté, les représentantes belges, relativement habituées à l'institutionnalisation de leurs activités militantes (Christine Weckx, Bruxelles, 3 mars 2006 et Poupette Choque, Bruxelles, 2 mars 2006) ont monté un dossier afin d'obtenir de la Commission européenne le financement d'un secrétariat européen de la Marche. Sans doute déposé un peu tard, ce projet, ne sera finalement pas retenu par la Commission, sachant cette première source de financement identifiée. En outre, un débat idéologique émerge sur le financement des actions de la marche relais de Marseille en mai 2005. Les organisatrices marseillaises proposent de demander de l'argent aux institutions politiques locales, aux partis politiques, syndicats, etc. Mais, selon les contextes nationaux, la question de l'indépendance du mouvement des femmes vis-à-vis des acteurs politiques ne se pose pas de la même manière. Tandis qu'en France, en Italie ou en Belgique, les marcheuses n'hésitent pas à demander de l'argent aux institutions publiques et aux regroupements politiques qui participent directement au processus, la déléguée du Portugal en revanche, se prononce officiellement contre le financement par les partis politiques. À l'appui, les déléguées espagnoles soulignent que la manifestation de Vigo,

en Galice, au printemps 2004, a reposé sur une collecte de fonds autonome, permise par diverses activités de solidarité (Marche mondiale des femmes, 2004a :18). De son côté, la déléguée turque suggère de demander à toutes les Européennes de verser un Euro...comme si les capacités de mobilisations des femmes étaient si larges ! Autrement dit, la question financière demeure cruciale pour la construction d'un mouvement féministe européen et l'échec de la demande de financement auprès de la Commission européenne fragilise le travail de mobilisation pour la Marche relais de Marseille, les 28 et 29 mai 2005.

Ce problème de dernière minute posé à l'organisation des événements de 2005 est en grande partie lié aux pratiques de la coordination européenne de la Marche entre 2000 et 2005. En effet, pour contourner les limites et difficultés posées par un financement au coup par coup, les féministes ont recours à des pratiques qui évitent la recherche de fonds. Par exemple, en France, la personne qui s'occupe de la MMF est une permanente du syndicat SUD qui intègre dans son travail pour le syndicat celui pour la MMF (Nelly Martin, Paris, 10 septembre 2004). Au niveau européen, les militantes profitent de voyages financés par leur organisation aux diverses réunions du mouvement altermondialiste, pour se rencontrer aussi dans le cadre de la MMF. Ainsi, entre 2000 et 2005, dans ce contexte de pénurie de financement, l'organisation, par le mouvement altermondialiste, de Forum sociaux européens (FSE) finit par constituer l'un des ciments du maintien de rencontres de la coordination européenne de la MMF. Mais, si la légitimité de la présence des femmes et de la MMF dans le mouvement altermondialiste est reconnue, leur participation réelle aux décisions et orientations discursives du mouvement continue de faire l'objet de luttes, ce qui constitue une seconde difficulté pour la viabilité d'un mouvement féministe à l'échelle européenne. De fait, les principales questions posées lors de la réunion de la coordination européenne pendant le rassemblement de Vigo concernent la perte des financements de nombreux groupes de femmes *et* la sourde oreille des dirigeants du mouvement altermondialiste aux revendications féministes (Dental, 2004).

## **B. Une lutte pour la reconnaissance et la légitimité dans le mouvement altermondialiste**

Entre 2000 et 2005, de nombreuses rencontres MMF-Europe se font à l'occasion de réunions préparatoires des FSE et pendant ces Forums, qui ont lieu tous les ans depuis 2002. Toutefois, les liens avec les altermondialistes ne sont pas simples et les rapports de pouvoir s'ancrent dans un androcentrisme culturel peu conscientisé, qui conduit à des pratiques politiques limitant les possibilités d'expression des féministes. La question de la représentation politique pour les féministes comporte toujours deux dimensions, celle de leur présence et celle de la représentation de leurs discours et de leurs intérêts (Philipps, 1995 ; Giraud, 2005). Au sein du mouvement altermondialiste, cette question se pose tout autant que dans les institutions politiques des démocraties. Même si le mouvement affiche clairement une volonté de diversité (Lamoureux, 2005) et de démocratie directe, lors du premier Forum Social Européen à Florence, du 6 au 10 novembre 2002, devant l'accaparement des tribunes et des micros par des hommes blancs d'une cinquantaine d'années, la coordination européenne de la Marche s'insurge. Elle revendique la parité des orateurs dans les forums, ainsi que la possibilité d'organiser une conférence « femmes » au prochain FSE (Commission Marche mondiale des femmes, 2002). Concrètement, la MMF a beau faire officiellement partie des mouvements sociaux qui composent le mouvement altermondialiste, les relations avec les organisateurs du mouvement fluctuent selon les espaces de rencontres. Lors du contre Sommet du G8 à Evian (France) du 29 mai au 1<sup>er</sup> juin 2003, des femmes libertaires créent un espace à part et participent à l'organisation

d'un réseau féministe non-mixte dans le mouvement altermondialisation. La dénonciation de l'attitude des hommes qui accompagne ce geste est très mal acceptée par les militants eux-mêmes, lesquels se pensent progressistes, donc très ouverts et égalitaires. Ces derniers s'engagent alors dans un bras de fer idéologique avec les féministes, en investissant le terrain de leur militantisme via le mouvement queer et LGBT (Lesbien-Gay-Bi-Trans), développant une approche théorique qui présente la dérive d'écarter les rapports sociaux de sexe pour les fondre dans un ensemble de discriminations liées à l'orientation sexuelle (Beauzamy, 2004).

À Paris en 2003, lors du Forum social européen, un effort est bien consenti par les leaders altermondialistes sur le sexe des orateurs, même si on se trouve encore loin de la parité sur les tribunes. Cependant, l'Assemblée des femmes est reléguée en avant-première du Forum social, la veille de l'ouverture, comme si ses questionnements ne faisaient pas partie intégrante des débats altermondialistes. En outre, lors d'une plénière consacrée à « l'apport du féminisme au mouvement social », un certain décalage nous est apparu entre les représentations que se font des hommes du féminisme et les interventions des femmes dans la salle. Par exemple, tandis que Miguel Benasayag insistait sur la dimension « grassroots » du féminisme, véritable contre-pouvoir qui agit par le bas, au niveau sociétal, les interventions des femmes avaient tendance à poser clairement la question de la place des femmes dans les sphères de pouvoir et les possibles actions « par le haut », à commencer par le pouvoir au sein des mouvements sociaux mixtes :

Lors du bilan à Florence nous avons compté une minorité de femmes parmi les intervenants et parfois aucune. Ces faits révèlent un problème de représentation du pouvoir et de reproduction des rapports patriarcaux. Dans ce contexte, il est difficile de faire émerger le genre comme question politique. D'où la décision d'organiser une assemblée européenne pour les droits des femmes, (nous avons accueilli environ 3000 personnes) pour rendre visibles les inégalités, les résistances, les luttes (...) Il faut faire porter un engagement, par exemple dans la Charte du FSE, inscrire un code de conduite égalitaire : la parité intégrée aux modes de fonctionnement et une organisation du travail respectueuse. Il faut pousser à des changements dans les modes de fonctionnement et les mentalités. (Annick Coupé, Union syndicale-G10, Solidaires France, Paris- Saint-Denis le 13 octobre 2003)

À Londres en octobre 2004, la parité des orateurs-oratrices est en progrès. Toutefois, elle ne s'accompagne pas d'une visibilité du discours féministe, lequel a plutôt cristallisé des oppositions entre les tenants-es d'une analyse féministe en termes de système (patriarcat, sexisme, oppression) et ceux-celles qui conservent une approche libérale, en termes de « catégorie » (Martin, 2004). Le lien entre présence de femmes et présence du discours féministe n'est pas automatique, surtout dans un contexte revendicatif des femmes fondamentalistes, ce qui explique le maintien de demandes de moments spécifiques pour la question des droits des femmes. De surcroît, toute une polémique émerge autour de l'importante place accordée aux fondamentalistes musulmans (Venner, 2004), comparée au peu de séminaires laissés aux féministes (2 plénières et 6 séminaires), et l'organisation d'un séminaire au titre provocateur, assimilant le choix de porter le voile au « droit de choisir », une terminologie utilisée depuis les années soixante-dix pour le droit à l'avortement (Dufour et Giraud, 2005 :13).

En revanche, là où les féministes de la Marche mondiale ont d'ors et déjà créé un rapport de force politique en leur faveur au sein de leur propre mouvement social national, la place de leurs problématiques dans l'organisation des rencontres transnationales est complètement différente. Par exemple, les féministes espagnoles dont le mouvement représente un fer de lance du mouvement social espagnol, ont pleinement investi la préparation des divers Forum sociaux Méditerranée, des Forums altermondialistes qui regroupent des personnes du bassin méditerranéen, du côté européen, africain et du Moyen-Orient. Parmi les axes thématiques du Forum de Barcelone, du 16 au 19 juin 2005, se trouvent les axes « démocratie, citoyenneté, droit de la personne, homme/femme » ; « Femmes et Méditerranée, expériences des femmes dans le bassin méditerranéen » ; « thème du genre », l'Assemblée des femmes devant reprendre tout ce qui se fait durant le FSM sur les questions d'égalité. Se tiennent également deux séminaires sur la « reproduction et la durabilité de la vie » et sur « l'appréciation et la reconnaissance du travail des femmes » (Marche mondiale des femmes, 2004a).

Le problème de la visibilité de la MMF et des problématiques féministes qui accompagnent l'expression des femmes dans les Forums sociaux européens, a découragé tout de même de nombreuses militantes, qui nous ont avoué ne plus vouloir participer à ces forums. Pour certaines, les féministes sont allées plus loin que les altermondialistes dans la recherche d'alternatives politiques (CNDF, 2004). Pour d'autres, c'est l'inverse. Le mouvement altermondialiste serait le lieu de création politique, d'invention d'alternatives indispensable aux féministes pour sortir d'un discours plutôt ancré dans le registre de la dénonciation que dans celui de *l'empowerment* (Joëlle Palmieri, Paris, le 9 septembre 2004). Ces difficultés renvoient alors directement à celles liées à la construction d'un mouvement féministe européen, au-delà de la diversité des tendances et des groupes qui composent le féminisme.

### **C. Des tensions d'ordre idéologique et analytique à l'intérieur des mouvements des femmes**

Pour le Forum social européen de Paris Saint-Denis du 13 au 16 novembre 2003, la coordination française de la Marche mondiale des femmes crée une nouvelle structure, l'Assemblée des femmes du Forum social européen. Définie comme un « espace politique décisif pour les femmes du mouvement féministe européen, lieu de création d'un programme pour une autre Europe féministe, sociale, solidaire, écologiste, altermondialiste » (Rome-Chastanet, 2005), cette nouvelle structure aspire à élargir la base des acteurs associatifs et syndicaux impliqués, en ralliant des femmes du mouvement altermondialiste qui ne s'identifient pas nécessairement à la Marche mondiale. D'ailleurs, des représentantes de la Pologne, l'Angleterre, l'Ecosse, et la Turquie, présentes à Berlin en avril 2002 pour la préparation du FSE de Paris –et de l'Assemblée des femmes (Martin, 2002), n'étaient pas dans la coordination européenne de la Marche mondiale des femmes en 2000. Toutefois, ce dédoublement des structures n'est pas sans poser problème à l'esprit même de construction d'un mouvement à l'échelle européenne, sous l'égide de la MMF, ainsi qu'en témoigne Nelly Martin, coordonnatrice de la Marche pour la France :

Le problème c'est que, d'un côté on a l'Assemblée des femmes, où en fait ce sont les femmes de la Marche qui ont été les initiatrices, et d'un autre côté on a la Marche mondiale. Et pour nous, la Marche et l'Assemblée,

c'est un peu la même chose. Quand on a proposé à la fin de l'Assemblée des femmes qu'il y ait un réseau qui prenne en charge la suite, parce qu'il faut gérer les noms, et qu'on a proposé la Marche mondiale, il y a des filles qui n'ont pas voulu. Soit elles font partie d'une association, d'une association européenne, aussi, la peur que la marche ramasse le truc. Le problème en fait c'est qu'on est dans les deux, mais c'est la Marche, qui a cette vocation là, à s'ouvrir à toutes les associations ! Nous ce qu'on voudrait, c'est la construction de réseaux ouverts à toutes les associations qui le veulent en disant : on offre nos services pour coordonner. Mais ce n'est pas bien compris, encore. (Nelly Martin, Paris, 10 septembre 2004)

Ce problème d'unification des luttes féministes sous une même bannière est dédoublé par celui de la constitution de réseaux thématiques au sein de l'Assemblée des femmes qui, de manière autonome, tentent aussi d'agir comme contre pouvoir, en particulier auprès des altermondialistes. Tel est le cas du réseau « Femmes et pouvoir » réseau thématique plutôt actif depuis l'Assemblée des femmes de novembre 2003. Très présentes dans l'organisation des FSE, les militantes de ce réseau sont à l'origine de l'Initiative Féministe Européenne à Londres en 2004, Initiative constituée en association. Elles cherchent à peaufiner le travail de proposition pour la construction d'une Europe politique – avec notamment la parité à tous les stades, de l'élaboration de la constitution européenne à la composition des assemblées élues. Le vieux débat se trouve alors relancé entre celles qui prônent des luttes autonomes et celles qui estiment que le *mainstreaming* doit se faire au sein des autres mouvements sociaux et des institutions.

Ce phénomène de démultiplication des structures transnationales en parallèle à la Marche mondiale - et non pas en son sein, repose non seulement sur une question de défiance des unes envers les autres, mais aussi sur des divergences importantes en matière de prise de décision. Nous pouvons relever trois dimensions de l'opposition de militantes féministes, en particulier de la nouvelle génération, qui renvoient d'une manière générale au problème de la démocratie dans le mouvement. Le premier point de divergence concerne le statut des femmes. La principale critique adressée au mouvement est de faire reposer sa rhétorique sur la victimisation, alors que l'esprit même du nouveau militantisme transnational, en particulier dans le FSE, est celui de l'*empowerment*, c'est-à-dire de la recherche d'alternatives et d'actions (Joëlle Palmieri, Paris, le 9 septembre 2004). Dans ce même esprit, des militantes du réseau européen de jeunes féministes, NextGENDERation, suite à l'Assemblée des femmes de 2003, rédigent un texte critique intitulé : « Refusing to be « the women's question »... (NextGENDERation, 2005)

Le second point de friction concerne l'ethnocentrisme des organisatrices et de leurs discours. Toujours portée par le réseau NextGENDERation, cette critique repose sur une analyse des questions de genre, qui le croise désormais avec les oppressions liées à la race et la classe sociale. Ces jeunes féministes aimeraient voir plus de couleur et de diversité ethnique dans les panels, non pas à titre anecdotique, (opposant un « nous blanc » sujet preneur de décisions à un rôle de « témoins émouvants » donné aux femmes immigrées ou non occidentales – NextGENDERation, 2005 :20) mais avec une participation réelle aux discussions, à l'organisation et à l'élaboration des discours (NextGENDERation, 2005: 19-23). En outre, sur le plan théorique, un décalage

s'installe entre une logique binaire d'affrontement homme/femmes et une logique plus floue et pluraliste (issue des travaux de Judith Butler) qui ne conduit pas nécessairement aux mêmes prises de position politique – pensons en particulier l'opposition ouverte sur la question de la prostitution.

De surcroît, de jeunes féministes déplorent un certain âgisme, qui fait qu'il n'y a pas de réels échanges entre générations. Les jeunes peinent à faire reconnaître ce qu'elles peuvent apporter aux anciennes militantes – en particulier la question de la déconstruction du genre. À Marseille, en mai 2005, elles organisent un atelier à part. Toutefois, aucun compte-rendu de leurs échanges ne côtoie les autres comptes-rendus des ateliers sur le site Internet de la manifestation. Symptomatique de cette difficile interaction, le dernier rassemblement du Collectif national droits des femmes en France, comporte un nouveau thème, intitulé « la transmission du féminisme » (CNDF, 2005). En soi, le terme transmission sous-entend un geste à sens unique, des plus âgées vers les plus jeunes : la critique n'a pas manqué d'émerger sur une transmission « pas assez réciproque qui s'effectue trop à sens unique, liée à une méfiance vis-à-vis des jeunes et une reconnaissance insuffisante de leur place ». Pour les organisatrices de l'atelier, la question des échanges entre générations recoupe celle des échanges entre mouvements dont sont majoritairement issues les jeunes (liés au développement de l'altermondialisme et du renouveau du militantisme de gauche dans les années quatre-vingt-dix) et les mouvements dont étaient issues les anciennes (mouvements syndicaux et d'extrême gauche des années soixante-dix).

Ainsi, l'agrégation de la diversité des féminismes et des personnes porteuses de discours sur les droits et les libertés des femmes devient, en soi, un enjeu pour la construction d'un mouvement féministe unitaire au niveau européen. Lors de la rencontre européenne de la MMF-Europe à Vigo, en Galice, les 22 et 23 mai 2004, les militantes féministes de Galice ont, à côté des débats sur l'environnement et la constitution européenne, organisé un atelier sur la spiritualité, comme cela s'est fait aussi à Montréal en 2000. Mais la laïcité est un thème cher aux féministes françaises, ce qui fait dire poliment à Maya Surduts, du Collectif national droits des femmes : « Il faudra nous expliquer ! » (Marche mondiale des femmes, 2004a). Ainsi qu'en témoigne Monique Dental, il s'est dégagé de ce débat le sentiment d'une présence forte d'un féminisme essentialiste assez conservateur (Monique Dental, Paris, le 14 décembre 2004). L'intégrer nécessite toujours plus de montée en généralité, ce qui peut générer certaines frustrations à l'égard des capacités du mouvement à construire des revendications concrètes. Surmonter ce défi idéologique représente un but des militantes du noyau dur de la MMF, ainsi que le souligne la coordonnatrice belge Leen Vandamme, optimiste à cet égard :

On a vu lors de la marche à Marseille, par exemple, il y avait beaucoup plus de concordances des points de vue que de différences. La volonté était très grande d'abandonner des points de vue trop pointus au profit de la capacité à s'unir sur des questions fondamentales pour les femmes. Ça aussi, c'est un défi perpétuel dans un mouvement comme la Marche et comme l'altermondialisme. Il faut arriver à composer » (Leen Vandamme à STOFFEL, 2005 :17)

La recherche continuelle d'un consensus peut tout de même générer le risque de construire un mouvement contre-productif, incapable de gérer démocratiquement les conflits idéologiques (NextGENDERation, 2005 :20)

La construction d'un mouvement féministe européen à travers la MMF rencontre donc, entre 2000 et 2005, un certain nombre de difficultés sur le plan idéologique qui renvoient à des débats anciens et nouveaux sur les fondements de l'analyse féministe. La recherche d'une unité de parole sur les questions des droits des femmes pouvant faire consensus au-delà de textes très généraux - et tel est effectivement l'enjeu à l'échelle européenne, de parvenir à ancrer les revendications dans une réalité institutionnelle concrète et représenter une force de propositions-, peut paraître frustrant et redondant d'une rencontre à l'autre. Ainsi, au fur et à mesure, l'univers des possibilités pour concrétiser l'ambition de construire un mouvement féministe européen tend à se restreindre. Ces difficultés, plus que les limites des réponses institutionnelles, ont rendu les actrices MMF plus modestes, aspirant plutôt à pérenniser des réseaux transnationaux thématiques ou bilatéraux suffisamment importants pour pouvoir être activés pour des campagnes ou des mobilisations ponctuelles.

### **III. Une démobilisation supranationale au profit d'un recentrement sur des mobilisations locales et l'activation de réseaux transversaux**

Les limites des ressources organisationnelles rencontrées par la coordination européenne de la MMF-Europe ont pour premier effet de renforcer la dimension locale des mobilisations à l'échelle européenne. Selon les capacités de mobilisation féministe du pays organisateur, le nombre de militantes, présentes aux rencontres européennes, fluctue entre 2000 et 2005. Dans un premier temps, nous verrons que ces fluctuations ne sont pas liées à une démobilisation sur l'enjeu institutionnel européen, qui, au contraire, tend à se renforcer entre 2000 et 2005 autour des débats sur le Traité de Constitution européenne. De ce fait, l'impulsion pour un recentrement sur des mobilisations locales et l'activation de réseaux transversaux provient plutôt du répertoire d'action collective choisi au niveau mondial, avec la pratique de marches relais autour de la Charte mondiale des femmes pour l'humanité, que d'une stratégie de la MMF au niveau européen.

#### **A. Une démobilisation régionale au niveau européen ?**

Entre 2000 et 2005, l'enjeu institutionnel européen tend à se renforcer pour les militantes de la MMF. Le projet de Constitution européenne et de consolidation du rôle politique de l'Union européenne suscite un regain d'analyse critique et de propositions d'alternatives. En 2003, le Manifeste, lancé à l'issue de l'Assemblée des femmes du 12 novembre, s'intitule : « Avec les femmes, pour une autre Europe » et débute avec une dénonciation du Traité constitutionnel de l'Union Européenne. Les féministes de tous bords, y compris le Lobby européen des femmes, qui a envoyé des représentantes à l'Assemblée des femmes, dénoncent l'absence de l'égalité entre hommes et femmes comme valeur identitaire de l'Union, la référence à l'héritage chrétien, la constitutionnalisation de la libre concurrence y compris dans le domaine des services publics, la dimension militariste du lien avec l'OTAN. Elles réclament une Europe démilitarisée, des services publics en particulier aux personnes, la citoyenneté pleine et entière, la libre disposition par les femmes de leur corps, et la laïcité (Manifeste des femmes, 2003). Cette fois, plutôt que de s'adresser aux institutions européennes et de rencontrer des dirigeants, ce que fait déjà le Lobby

européen des femmes, ces demandes sont envoyées aux partis politiques (ceux de gauche s'étant généralement engagés à soutenir la MMF), lesquels se trouvent en pleine préparation des élections européennes du printemps 2004 (Femmes et pouvoir, 2004). Cependant, seulement 2000 personnes sont présentes au rassemblement, tandis que le défilé dans les rues de Bobigny ne rassemble pas plus de 5000 manifestantes. Alors que l'Assemblée est organisée de concert avec le FSE, que les Français critiquent fortement la Constitution européenne, il est clair que cette faible mobilisation relève surtout de la faible capacité de mobilisation des féministes françaises dont le mouvement demeure marginalisé dans le mouvement social.

À l'inverse, en 2004, 20 000 manifestantes se rassemblent à Vigo lors de la rencontre européenne. Pourtant, Vigo étant située à l'extrémité ouest de la péninsule ibérique, et non pas au centre de l'Europe comme Paris, rassembler autant de militantes à un tel endroit peut être vu comme une véritable gageure, avec un grand travail de communication auprès des médias espagnols et locaux (Marche mondiale des femmes en Belgique, 2004). Dans les faits, la rencontre de 2004, entièrement organisée par les Galiciennes, a surtout attiré des Espagnoles et des Portugaises. Les organisatrices sont elles-mêmes surprises, ainsi que le confirme le témoignage de l'une d'elles, Éva, lors du compte-rendu de la rencontre à la réunion de la Coordination européenne, à Bruxelles, en octobre 2004 :

Nous nous sommes sous-estimées dans nos capacités car nous n'avions jamais imaginé ce que cela est devenu et ce que nous avons obtenu comme participation, tant du public que de la couverture médiatique. Nous croyons qu'aujourd'hui, la MMF est le seul mouvement social en Espagne capable de faire avancer les choses. (Marche mondiale des femmes, 2004a : 19)

Certes, ce rassemblement a lieu trois semaines avant les élections européennes (du 13 juin 2004) autour du thème : « Pour une autre Europe de toutes, différentes, oui ! Inégales, non ! ». Mais cet enjeu européen n'est sans doute pas ce qui explique le mieux le succès de cette mobilisation. D'une part, il y a le contexte espagnol, que nous avons déjà décrit comme favorable au mouvement des femmes (cf. II. B). D'autre part, il y a le contexte portugais. Lors de la réunion de la Coordination européenne de la MMF à Lisbonne, en mars 2004, les membres de la Coordination adoptent une résolution de solidarité à l'appui d'une pétition populaire des Portugaises réclamant la tenue d'un référendum sur la décriminalisation de l'avortement. Plus de 120 000 signatures sont recueillies, afin que le Parlement modifie une loi exigeant que des accusations soient portées contre toute femme ayant recours à l'avortement (MMF, 2004b). Ainsi, à Vigo deux mois plus tard, la mobilisation des Portugaises est forte, dans l'attente d'effets de cet appui transnational sur leurs luttes nationales<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Malheureusement, cette lutte menée de manière offensive autour de deux campagnes consécutives n'a donné aucun résultat – sauf le découragement des militantes portugaises qui craignent dès lors de ne pas pouvoir beaucoup mobiliser autour de la Charte mondiale des femmes (Marche mondiale des femmes, 2004a : 25).



Enfin, étant donnée l'importance des enjeux institutionnels européens, la marche relais pour l'Europe de la Charte mondiale des femmes, à Marseille, les 28 et 29 mai 2005, aurait dû aussi rassembler beaucoup de monde. Elle a lieu la veille du référendum français sur le Traité de constitution européenne, dont on sait par ailleurs qu'il a contribué à renforcer les réseaux des militants-es anti-mondialisation libérale. Nombre de marcheuses sont mobilisées depuis plusieurs mois contre le projet de Constitution et la directive Bolkenstein, notamment les syndicalistes, regroupées dans un « Pôle femmes » qui sont venues manifester le 19 mars 2005 à Bruxelles avec leurs syndicats « pour une Europe sociale, égalitaire, solidaire et pacifiste ». Pourtant, la marche relais européen de la Charte à Marseille ne réunit que 12 000 personnes environ. L'enjeu constitutionnel et institutionnel européen est pourtant central dans la rencontre. Le forum « démocratie, pouvoir, égalité hommes femmes en Europe », à partir de la critique élaborée en France par la Coordination féministe pour le non à la constitution, décline une série de revendications très précises adressées à l'UE (Collectif 13, 2005) :

- la référence à l'égalité hommes/femmes comme valeur de l'Union européenne ;
- que les textes européens sur l'égalité s'imposent aux États membres ;
- que la parité soit effective dans toutes les instances nationales et européennes ;
- un statut de partenaire sociétal au niveau des institutions nationales et européennes pour les associations féministes ;
- une harmonisation des droits des femmes selon les « critères les plus élevés et les plus progressistes » dans tous les pays européens ;
- la liberté en matière de sexualité, d'accès à la santé et d'avortement-contraception,
- la laïcité comme principe de base du fonctionnement de l'Union.

Cette déclinaison de demandes concrètes au niveau de gouvernance européen se trouve même beaucoup plus lobbyiste que l'esprit de la Charte mondiale des femmes pour l'humanité qui constitue le document de base des mobilisations de 2005. Toutefois, si l'on observe de près le répertoire d'action collective, aucune rencontre particulière n'est organisée avec les représentants du Parlement européen ou de la Commission. Et si l'on considère plus particulièrement le lieu géographique de la rencontre, force est de constater que les institutions européennes, basées dans le nord de l'Europe, ne sont pas directement interpellées par une manifestation dans les rues de Marseille, au sud de la France.

Ainsi, pour comprendre les variations dans les mobilisations selon les régions d'Europe, ce sont surtout les enjeux locaux qui permettent de saisir les dynamiques ouvrant ensuite sur des mobilisations à l'échelle européenne. Comme on l'a vu, alors qu'en France la difficulté tient à la faible légitimité politique du mouvement féministe, en revanche en Espagne, l'importance des mobilisations repose sur la bonne intégration et la reconnaissance du mouvement des femmes par la société. Ainsi, la mobilisation des ressources sur les enjeux transnationaux dépend surtout de la reconnaissance par les autres mouvements sociaux, par les médias, par les institutions politiques, du mouvement féministe et de ses composantes. Autrement dit, l'échelle de la lutte et ses enjeux importe moins que les rapports de pouvoir à l'œuvre dans l'espace national où se déroule l'action collective transnationale.

## B. Recentrement sur les acteurs locaux et les réseaux

De même qu'en 2000, en 2005 en Europe, c'est la MMF au niveau mondial qui fournit l'impulsion majeure pour l'organisation d'événements. La Charte mondiale des femmes pour l'humanité ne suscite pas beaucoup d'enthousiasme chez les membres de la Coordination européenne. Au contraire, les représentantes européenne au Rwanda, lors de l'adoption de la Charte en décembre 2005, avaient pour mission d'intégrer l'expression « droit à l'avortement » à la Charte, et leur échec (relatif, puisqu'il est inscrit que les femmes peuvent choisir ou non d'avoir des enfants) est interprété en Europe comme un signe de distance entre la définition des enjeux autour de la pauvreté et la violence au niveau mondial, et la définition des enjeux en termes de citoyenneté et de droits et libertés au niveau européen. Mais la Marche mondiale des femmes au niveau international représente encore une force imaginaire pour la motivation d'Européennes difficiles à mobiliser, et un lien impulsif, les actions transnationales permettant de relancer le travail entre réseaux d'organisations féministes, dans un contexte où le mouvement altermondialiste, ses rendez-vous biannuels et ses propres manifestations, ainsi que toutes celles autour de la Constitution européenne, ont tendance à accaparer le calendrier des militantes.

Le répertoire d'action collective proposé aux marcheuses par la MMF-mondiale en 2005 s'avère beaucoup plus ancré dans la vie militante locale que le répertoire de 2000. L'idée d'organiser des marches relais lors d'un tour du monde de la Charte mondiale des femmes et de la courtpointe qui se constitue par addition de carrés de patchwork par chaque pays, offre l'opportunité aux militantes de véritablement travailler à la fois leurs relations avec les institutions et entre groupes. L'année 2005 se caractérise par un grand nombre de micro-mobilisations locales – à travers des activités diverses et variées, plutôt que par de grandes manifestations. Par exemple, à Marseille et dans la région, les divers acteurs institutionnels, en particulier du Conseil général et du Conseil régional, qui se situent à gauche sur l'échiquier politique, sont directement interpellés et sollicités : ce sont eux qui financent une partie des festivités des 28 et 29 mai 2005 en mettant à disposition des locaux pour les forums de discussion. Dans cette région, entre le 8 mars et le 28 mai, la coordination de la MMF mène des actions d'information dans les écoles, auprès de la société civile, de la presse et des éluEs (*site MMF- France*). Mais au niveau national, en France, aucune rencontre avec le gouvernement n'est prévue.

De même, en Belgique les interactions avec le gouvernement fédéral sont soutenues entre 2000 et 2005, et l'Etat belge, via son Institut de l'égalité, soutient financièrement l'organisation des événements. Toutefois, les interlocuteurs directs des militantes sont les cinq ministres de l'égalité des gouvernements régionaux, invités le 17 octobre au débat des activités festives pour les 24 heures relais de la MMF, baptisées en Belgique « Confêttia ». D'ailleurs, la fin de la coordination au niveau national en décembre 2005 n'empêche pas la coordination bruxelloise de perdurer et de réorganiser en 2006 un « Parlement des femmes » pour interpellier le gouvernement de la ville. En outre, lorsqu'on interroge des militantes belges sur les apports de la MMF à leur mouvement, elles ont tendance à insister sur la constitution de réseaux et la création de collectifs locaux (militantes de Femmes prévoyance socialistes de Belgique, Marseille, le 28 mai 2005)

Finalement, malgré des réserves sur la Charte et la multiplication de micro actions collectives locales, ce repli sur des répertoires plus modestes en 2005 pourrait aussi contribuer, par le

renforcement de réseaux, à rendre possible dans l'avenir des mobilisations plus massives à l'échelle européenne, mobilisables par une poignée de militantes « Marche mondiale » (Nelly Martin, Paris, le 10 septembre 2004). Les mobilisations de la MMF en 2005 conduisent par exemple, à créer des réseaux de solidarité participant au regroupement de peuples en proie à des conflits et des inimitiés multiséculaires. Nous pensons en particulier au travail réalisé conjointement par les coordinations grecque et turque, qui permet de poser les jalons du développement d'un réseau balkanique de la MMF en même temps que des gestes de paix fort symboliques, ainsi qu'en témoigne ce récit par la coordination grecque, mis en ligne sur le site de la MMF :

« Nous avons clôturé avec des discours antinationalistes et sur les droits des femmes, en soulignant le rôle que peut jouer la solidarité féministe pour la construction des ponts entre nos peuples, si longtemps « ennemis héréditaires » dans une région traumatisée par les guerres nationalistes, les « échanges de populations » et les nettoyages ethniques. Nous avons proposé aussi une politique de désarmement à nos pays respectifs. (...) Jamais dans l'histoire des voix de femmes turques et grecques, manifestant ensemble, n'avaient résonné dans les rues de cette grande ville (Thessalonique)» (Sonia Mitralias, « rapport de la marche mondiale des femmes en Grèce en 2005 », site Internet de la MMF)

Outre la construction de réseaux nationaux ou bilatéraux, les mobilisations MMF-2005 ont relancé la consolidation, en particulier en Europe, de réseaux thématiques transnationaux, ce qui conduit à une meilleure circulation des informations entre féministes européennes. Les militantes du Portugal et d'Italie, qui travaillent sur les droits reproductifs, sont venues demander à Marseille un renouvellement du soutien des Européennes à leurs luttes. Le réseau européen thématique sur l'avortement et la contraception prend forme petit à petit, et par exemple, les militantes anglaises ont manifesté devant le Consulat italien en même temps que les féministes italiennes, lors du référendum sur la loi sur la Procréation médicalement assistée de 2004 qui devait conférer un statut de personne à l'embryon. (Chabaud, 2005 ; CNDF, 2006). Autre exemple, en Belgique, Christine Weckx, de Vie Féminine, une association d'éducation populaire, souligne qu'à l'occasion de la marche de Marseille, elle a pu nouer des contacts avec des Françaises travaillant sur le sexisme et désirerait à l'avenir enclencher des actions dans ce domaine avec elles (Christine Weckx, Bruxelles, 3 mars 2006).

Ainsi, le recentrement sur une politique *from below*, autour des actrices militantes et des acteurs institutionnels locaux et de *glocalisation*, par le renforcement de réseaux thématiques transnationaux, se présente plutôt comme un effet des faiblesses organisationnelles et financières au niveau européen, que comme une stratégie délibérée. Ainsi que le suggère la théorie de Verta Taylor sur les mouvements en suspension (*abeyance*) (Taylor, 1989), le problème de la reconnaissance du féminisme de base par les autres mouvements sociaux comme par les institutions européennes, environnement politique hostile qui leur donne peu de légitimité, exigerait, pour que le mouvement perdure plus sûrement entre deux marches, que les militantes de la MMF-Europe parviennent à créer un mouvement plus centralisé. Quoique conscientes de cette nécessité organisationnelle, les leaders de la MMF au niveau européen ont jusqu'à date échoué dans cette voie. Ainsi, faute de créer « par le haut », un mouvement féministe européen

fort et rassembleur, elles laissent se développer « par le bas » un mouvement multiforme, inégal selon les régions d'Europe, mais constitué de réseaux de travail, de relations bilatérales, d'échanges ponctuels d'idées et de recettes politiques. Qui sait, ces relations transnationales nouvelles pourraient peut-être s'avérer plus solides et assez profondément ancrées dans les pratiques militantes quotidiennes pour changer, « par le bas », la dynamique de reconnaissance et de légitimation des féministes de base en Europe...

### **Conclusion :**

Dans le cas de la MMF en Europe, il nous semble que le glissement d'une ambition de création d'un mouvement féministe à l'échelle européenne à un certain recentrement sur une politique de *glocalisation* en direction des acteurs locaux – associatifs, institutionnels etc. ne peut pas vraiment être rattaché à une déception concernant les résultats de demandes insatisfaites. Même si cette donnée existe, ce glissement tient plus à des difficultés d'ordre organisationnel et idéologique, qui font que l'impulsion et les choix stratégiques peuvent moins être imputés aux actrices de la MMF-Europe, qu'à la MMF au niveau mondial.

En effet, du côté de la mobilisation des ressources, le nombre de militantes s'amointrit, les capacités financières font défaut, même les ressources technologiques sont largement insuffisantes et interviennent non pas comme préalable à la transnationalisation, mais comme effet dette dernière : par exemple, la France n'a pas de site web pour la marche avant la création du site de l'association marseillaise organisatrice de la rencontre européenne de 2005. Du côté des opportunités politiques, nous avons constaté leur rétrécissement au niveau européen et leur fluctuation aux niveaux nationaux et locaux. Finalement, les conditions de consolidation du mouvement MMF-Europe reposent sur l'ouverture-fermeture du mouvement altermondialiste aux militantes et aux idées féministes. Or, dans ce rapport de force, le mouvement doit donner l'image d'une unité identitaire et idéologique, ce qui ne peut se construire qu'en contradiction avec l'aspiration à rassembler l'ensemble des militantes de base en Europe, qu'elles appartiennent à des groupes de femmes, à des syndicats, à des associations mixtes, ou encore, à des partis politiques de gauche. Une tension se crée alors entre la recherche d'un consensus revendicatif et d'une identité féministe européenne d'une part, et la diversité bien réelle des identités politiques des femmes qui composent le mouvement, d'autre part. Finalement, nous pouvons nous demander si ce n'est pas presque malgré elles que les Européennes sont amenées, petit à petit, par les répertoires d'action collective de la MMF au niveau mondial et ses impulsions successives, à construire un mouvement féministe européen fait de réseaux thématiques transnationaux, de réseaux associatifs bilatéraux et d'inscription plus durable des féministes et de leurs revendications dans les enjeux politiques locaux.

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# WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND TRANSNATIONALIZATION: DEVELOPING A SCALAR APPROACH

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## *Introduction*

Sharing different ways of constructing knowledge for a better understanding of the transnationalization of women's movements is one of the objectives of this workshop. In this perspective, the purpose of this paper is to provide workshop participants with the opportunity to explore new contributions in human and political geography that focus on *scale* as a central spatial dimension of the processes through which transnationalization of collective action takes place. Although this literature has not so far, to my knowledge, directly addressed women's movement organizing, it does offer ways to think about the transnationalization of movement activity that can, I will argue, benefit feminist research. My paper aims to use this literature to trace the lineaments of a scalar approach to transnationalization and to lay out the research agenda that such work currently suggests for feminist scholars. In particular, this paper will assert that the transnationalization of women's movement activity may be better and more fully understood when thinking through the conceptual vocabulary of scale -- with its spatial and relational implications -- rather than as part of a pre-given and un-theorized scaffolding of "levels" of action (its closest contender). Thinking in terms of scale, this paper will suggest, draws some new lines of inquiry regarding women's movements and transnationalization. Furthermore, an emphasis on scale enables us to pull these and other, existing concerns, together into a coherent framework. In my view, this is where the strength of a scalar approach lies, and this is what I hope to show.

Human and political geographers have been critical of the tendency in social movement scholarship to neglect the spatial dimensions of collective action. Such criticism holds true of feminist studies of women's movements as well. Social movement scholarship in its various hues suffers from "methodological nationalism" (Conway, 2005), that is, the tendency to frame its understanding of movements within the spatial boundaries of the nation-state. Although such state-centric assumptions, Conway suggests, are being currently displaced in certain circles, it is by an equally problematic "methodological globalism" in which "the global" becomes the central -- assumed and pre-given -- spatial frame of reference (2005: 2). Despite allusions in social movement literature to the existence of other spaces and scales of collective action -- such as the local and the regional, the parish and the neighborhood, the transnational and the grassroots -- space itself is treated as a simple geographical signifier: that is, as an unproblematized container for processes in which it plays merely a descriptive role as a site, scene, or background (Sewell, 2001). Literature reviews by Miller (2000) and Sewell (2001) clearly show that the field of social movement studies has remained largely blind to issues of space and spatial differentiation. If it is acknowledged that collective action does occur in

different spaces, the latter, however, seem not to have much bearing on collective action. "There is no recognition," Miller writes, "that the spatial constitution" (or spatial grounding) of processes of collective action profoundly "affects their operation" (2000: 6). Except perhaps in the study of urban movements, space has been so far un-theorized in social movement studies, and the analytical potential of spatial conceptualizations, it follows, has remained underutilized. Although *scale* has recently surfaced in the theoretical vocabulary of feminist and social movement work as movements themselves have Europeanized, internationalized, or transnationalized in various ways (see in particular Tarrow and McAdam, 2005; Dufour and Giraud, 2004), it is nonetheless with very little engagement with the existing and quite sophisticated geographical arguments on scale and rescaling.

To enable this engagement, this paper will, first, briefly present the main conceptual elements that underlay current scalar approaches to the transnationalization of collective action in the geographical literature. These conceptualizations will then be further specified in the second part of the paper, as they will be fleshed out and interwoven with the theoretical and empirical questions arising from recent geographical work on a variety of transnational networks, organizations, movements, and events. Selected feminist work, published mostly but not exclusively in two recent publications on transnational women's movement organizing -- *Transnational Feminist Networks* by Valentine M. Moghadam (2005) and *Women's Activism and Globalization. Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*, edited by Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai (2002) will be counterposed -- whenever possible -- to the geographical contributions in order to show how they allude to, or could be fruitfully used in an analysis foregrounding elements of a scalar approach.

### **Part 1 -- Conceptual elements: space, scale and place**

"Scale" is a complex and somewhat contested concept in geography. Setting aside ontological debates about its (multiple) conceptual meanings, this section will present the theorizing that informs the new geographical literature on scale, rescaling, and movement politics, centering on what can be useful to our foray into the transnationalization of women's movements. Thinking about transnational movement organizing with a focus on scale also requires, I will argue, the additional theoretical understanding of "place." Scale and place being spatial concepts, I will start by specifying, briefly, the kind of understanding of "space" from which they arise.

"Space" is a central concept in geographical work and has been historically theorized in various ways (see review in Miller, 2000: 7-14). Since the mid-1980s, however, a consensus has formed in human geography around a Lefebvrian-influenced notion of space as a product of social relations. In this view, social relations are space-forming : social processes occur in space, are deployed through space and, in doing so, shape space itself, for instance, in terms of spatial distribution of people and activities, geographical differentiation, and the symbolic meanings attached to space(s). Explicit in this perspective is the premise that all social relations are necessarily spatialized -- they occur in and are deployed through space -- and this also holds true for social movement activity. Now, if it is one thing to agree that movement activity is necessarily spatialized, the question that remains is certainly : Why should that be of particular analytical interest for social movement scholars? Social relations are not only space-forming; they are also spatialized in a way that is space-contingent (Feldman, 2002:32). "Spatial

distributions and geographical differentiation may be the result of social processes, but they also affect how these processes work,” Miller writes (2000:10). For this reason, Massey argues, “it is also important for those in other social sciences to take on board the fact that the processes they study are constructed, reproduced and changed in ways which necessarily involve distance, movement and spatial differentiation.” (cited in Miller, 2000:10) Succinctly put, if the social relations and processes that constitute movement organizing and activities, are not only deployed in space but are *contingent* on it, then space and other spatial dimensions of collective action do matter for the study of movement politics: they are “part of the explanation” (Miller, 2000:10).

Developing an analytical understanding of the role and importance of “scale” in social movement politics is complicated by the fact that we are already provided, in the social sciences, with a scalar vocabulary from the smallest to the largest scales – that is, from the local to the regional, the national and the so-called global. In this prevalent conception, geographers argue, scales appear as pre-given, fixed, and empty containers for social processes in which they play no real part. Although there are different ways of theorizing and operationalizing scale in the new geographical literature on scale and rescaling (for a brief review and bibliographical indications see Mamadouh et al., 2004: 455-457), a useful way of understanding scale is to see it, first and foremost, as a spatial property of social relations. Social relations are not only deployed “in” space; the different economic and political processes that organize social relations and social life *extend and stretch over different (and variable) expanses of space*. The extent of such stretching is their “scale”. The main point here is that scale should not be thought of in a void or in the abstract, but always as a dimension of social processes (Swyngedouw, 1997b:141; Masson, 2005:16). *This suggests to us, minimally, that our attention should turn to what happens to the relations and processes that constitute social movements as such processes are expanded or contracted by collective actors, and especially as they hyperextend transnationally, over ever wider expanses of space.*

Scale can further be defined, according to Agnew, as “the focal setting at which spatial boundaries are defined for a specific social claim, activity, or behavior” (1997:100), thus indicating that scalar deployments themselves are actively organized by social agents doing the acting and the defining. Much of the geographical inquiry into scale construction has focused on processes of capitalist production and political regulation. Consequently the role of such major social actors as capital and states in making and remaking scales has been privileged. Capital and states are seen, in this perspective, as responsible for the temporarily “fixation” of preferred scales of economic relations and political regulation (Brenner, 1999), as well as for moments, such as the current one, of *rescaling*; that is, of profound reconfiguring of existing scalar deployments and hierarchies between scales (see for instance Swyngedouw, 1997a; Brenner, 1999; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999). Although social movements have been the object of less attention in this literature, it has been shown that they also engage into scalar deployments, organizing and mobilizing at different geographical scales. Social movements, it has been argued, actively make and remake the scales of collective action (Herod, 1997; Miller, 1997; Conway, 2005; Masson, 2005). In doing so, not only do they often engage with the existing “scalar fixes” or rescaling projects of dominant economic and state actors, but they may also develop their own logic(s) regarding scalar deployments, creating anew or aligning with (variously defined) scales of belonging and identification, environmental damage, or social justice, for instance (see Kurtz, 2003; Towers, 2004; Silvern, 1999). *Pursuing the constructionist*

*approach to scale suggested by the new developments in human and political geography draws our attention to such processes of scaling and rescaling of collective action and, in particular, to the scalar construction of “the transnational” in and through movement action.*

“Place”, finally, is often of central importance in the existing geographical literature on transnational movements. Such focus on “place” expresses a deep, conceptual reluctance to detach transnational networks, participants and events from their territorial moorings. Despite all the “globe talk” and “flux talk”, transnational social movement actors and actions are, in this literature, no more “free-floating cosmopolitans” than the transnational businessmen studied by Ley (2004). As with any other form of production of globalities, the formation of transnational collective action should, to extend an argument made by Flusty, “be seen as embedded both in space and in the lives of emplaced persons” (2004: 7). A “networks” approach to transnationalization yields a somewhat similar line of reasoning: networks extend in various directions over more or less vast expanses of space, yet, each point in the network sits in a particular place (Latour in Miller, 2005). Place, it is imperative to note, is not equivalent to “the local”. Places are units of analysis and, thus, may be set by the analyst at various scales. A useful way of understanding place is provided by Doreen Massey (1994). In her view, a place should be theorized as a locus and a moment where “economic, political and cultural relations, each full of power and with internal structures of domination” (154) and constructed at various scales intersect “in a distinct *mixture* of wider and more local social relations” (156, Massey’s italics). “Place”, thus, can be seen as geographers’ way of reintroducing space, spatialities and their uneven development in what others would grasp under the -- more limited -- notion of context. “Because it calls our attention to the spatial (...) situatedness of all human interaction and institutions” (Miller, 2000: 16), feminists should find “place”, especially in Massey’s version, an interesting addition to an understanding of positionality and the “politics of location”.

## **Part 2 -- Developing a scalar approach to studying transnational women’s movements:**

In the current era, different kinds of social relations are being rescaled. Economic processes have been restructuring and in the process have been shaping new spatialities of production and exchange. New, planetary “spaces of flow” -- of people, capital and goods -- are said to contribute to the constitution of a global economy and to the institutionalization of “the global” (scale) as a way of framing our understandings of this new reality. Economic globalization has been buttressed and actively supported by the rescaling of state spaces, that is, by the scalar displacement of capacities and responsibilities that had been so far the prerogative of the national state. Among these displacements, upward shifts have granted new, or renewed importance to supranational scales of political regulation through the workings of institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, the GATT, the European Union and the United Nations. In addition, the expansion of US-based “imperial globality” is shaping a “global coloniality” that has “heightened [the] marginalization and suppression of the knowledge and culture of subaltern groups” (Escobar, 2004:207 cited in Conway, 2005:1). The recent wave of transnationalization of social movement action (see table 5.5 in Tilly, 2004:118) is taking place in this particular context.

Accounts of the transnationalization of women’s movements highlight, in particular, the role of global economic restructuring and of structural adjustment programs in fostering a transnationalization of feminist solidarities. Other factors mentioned include: the rise of various

forms of religious fundamentalism and their renewed constraints on gender norms, the expansion of supranational forms of governance and of their role in defining the new economic and political world order; and the diffusion of a “human rights” discourse as a legitimized idiom to mount claims in these arenas, especially at the U.N. (Moghadam, 2005; Naples and Desai, 2002). Major economic and political changes and the availability of elements of an actionable political opportunity structure have, thus, provided the impetus for women’s movements to transnationalize. This very skeletal account notwithstanding, a scalar approach to studying transnational women’s movements would stress, first, the importance of bringing into view the historical dynamics of the constitution of these new scales of collective action – and I think we need to inquire deeper into the specific triggers and issues identified by particular feminist transnational movement organizations and networks as the (varied) rationales for their creation, and how these may or may not differ from other movements’.

Second, and most importantly, adopting a scalar approach means that the transnational scale cannot be considered by analysts as pre-existing to movement action. The transnational scale is not just there for the taking : like any other scale of collective action (see Masson, 2005) it has to be constructed, materially and discursively, for the women’s movement to act. The analysis, Feldman suggests, must emphasize “the very active role” social movements play in carving for themselves a place in “the international legal/political regimes upon which they are capitalizing” (2002: 42): organizing themselves, constructing issues and constituencies, and mobilizing the latter to successfully shape, open up and make use of the new trans- and supra-national political opportunity structures. In my view however, transnationalization further means that it is all the social relations that constitute collective action that have to be stretched beyond national boundaries, and concretely established in more or less institutionalized ways, in order to connect transnational participants (individuals and/or organizations) across wider-than-before expanses of space to enable political action above and across borders. If scale is a dimension of process, then crucial processes of collective action such as movement organizing, mobilizing, and claims-making have to be constructed, in their materiality as well as in discourse, at the transnational scale. *These observations beg the question as to exactly how the transnational scale – in the diversity of its instantiations – is materially and discursively constructed by women’s movement actors.*

Attending to the *construction* of the transnational as a scale of movement action raises in its wake many lines of inquiry. An important one is certainly that of the practical problems of transnationalizing. For instance, Moghadam (2005), in her study of transnational feminist networks, points to the issue of (much needed) financial and human resources, and in particular to the politics and limitations attached to funding, as well as to the professionalization of transnational movement networks and its likely consequences. However, within the geographical literature on transnationalization and social movement, the main interrogations are *related more specifically to the difficulties and dilemmas that stem from the increased spatial reach of the material and discursive relations constitutive of collective action.* Among the questions fostered by a scalar approach are the following. What are the difficulties and dilemmas “of political organizing across vast geographic expanses”? (Johnston, 2003: 93) What of “the very complex tradeoffs, constraints and contradictions” associated with rescaling movement organizing and strategies to include the supranational scale? (Feldman, 2002: 42) How are the relationships between the different scales of movement activity being reorganized by transnationalization,

and what are the related "problems of effecting politics between different geographical scales"? (Routledge, 2003: 333; also Conway, 2005) What about the role of "place" and the difference that place makes in transnational strategies? (Conway, 2005; Routledge, 2003; also Soyez, 2000, Featherstone, 2003) What happens to issues and claims when movements "scale up" to the transnational? (Arts, 2004) And what of the scalar limits or difficulties of constructing solidarity across and above borders? (Johnston, 2003)

Complicating the challenge of integrating scale (and place) in the study of movement transnationalization is the fact that the latter conjures up a very complex reality. Without attempting in any way to be exhaustive, transnationalization in the women's movement includes, among other things, the constitution and operation of transnational women's movement organizations and transnational feminist networks, initiated "from above" (see Hrycak, 2002) as well as "from below" (see Mendez, 2002); the enactment of various kinds of transnational actions, from the organizing of transnational events such as the Women's World March of 2000 or the relay of the Women's Charter for Humanity, to the lobbying of international institutions, to transnational pressures campaigns on national states; as well as collaboration between transnational organizations or networks and women's groups operating at various other scales and the establishment of cross-border linkages among the latter, including the grassroots (see Weber, 2002).

In order to reduce such complexity to more manageable proportions, it can be useful here to echo Mamadouh in her suggestion that movements' scalar practices can be analyzed by looking at different facets, or processes of collective action. She also reminds us of the importance of approaching scale through both its material and discursive dimensions (2004: 482). Although there are a variety of ways to cut across and delimit the different processes of collective action, I propose to order our remaining exploration of the relevance of a scalar approach to transnationalization in women's movements by focusing on scalar practices and discourses around transnational A) organizing, B) action, and C) claims-making or, more precisely, the framing of claims.

### *A) Spatialities in transnational movement organizing*

Tarrow defines transnational social movements as "sustained contentious interactions with opponents - national or non-national - by connected networks of challengers organized across national boundaries" (Tarrow, 1998:184 cited in Dufour and Giraud, 2004: 3). Such formulation suggests that what defines "the transnational" in movement organizing is the cross-border character of the connections established between challengers. Without getting into distinctions between internationalism and transnationalism, or between transnational movement organizations and networks, transnational organizing can thus be temporarily defined as the institutionalization of organizational structures that bring participants together across national boundaries around a common agenda. Going transnational, movements "upscale", and in doing so encounter new challenges and, it is sometimes argued, undergo qualitative changes. The generic application of the term "transnational" for all forms of cross-border organizing, in this sense, has its theoretical justifications. From a geographical point of view, however, such generic use tends to obfuscate the rich variety of the ways in which transboundary networks and organizations "construct the transnational scale" through their spatial deployments.

The Association of Women of the Mediterranean Region (AWMR), for instance, “unites women of Albania, Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Gibraltar, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey” and Serbia. around a variety of issues. AWMR’s mission is regional (Moghadam, 2005:174) – its spatial deployment is bounded by the discursive construction of “the Mediterranean” as a supra-national scale of political identification. Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) regroups individuals and women’s groups from “Muslim countries and communities” and maintains “three coordination offices -- an international coordination office in Europe, one in Pakistan (Shirkat Gah) for Asia, and one in Nigeria (Baobab) for Africa.” (Moghadam, 2005:162, 163). WLUML’s membership and action span three continents and aim at linking a diversity of non-contiguous “places” defined through the presence of institutionalized Islamic rule. The European Women’s Lobby (EWL) (Helfferich and Kolb, 2000) and Women in Development Europe (WIDE) (Moghadam, 2005), for their part, recruit affiliates in the member states of the European Union as they attempt to influence policymaking in the latter’s institutions. The scalar deployment of EWL and WIDE is thus intimately entwined with the scalar reach of the supra-national state space that is its main political target, and is fated to expand as the EU itself expands to new member states. These examples, and those of other transnational feminist networks such as the Asia-Pacific Research and Resource Organization for Women, the Latin American and Caribbean Women’s Health Network (Moghadam, 2005: 8, 11), or the Central American Network of Women in Solidarity with Maquila Workers (Mendez, 2002) suggest the existence of a great variety of distinct spatialities to women’s movement transnational organizing.

These few examples aptly demonstrate that what we call the transnational scale of movement organizing exists in fact through a diversity of spatial and scalar instantiations. Transboundary collective actors vary greatly in the geographic origin of the participants they bring together, in the expanses of space they span, in the spatial reach of their objectives, and in the places they link together. The idea that scale is constructed and that social movements actively construct their scales of organizing according to their own logics -- sometimes inventing radically new scales of political practice (Brenner, 2001: 594; Conway, 2005: 2) -- opens up the possibility that different logics of association result in a variety of organizational spatial deployments : what we call the “transnational” needs to be unpacked. If transnational feminist networks may choose to organize on a scale coterminous with the supranational state spaces they target (the scale of the EU, the scale of the U.N.), they do not always mimic the scale of supra-national political institutions. As we can appreciate from the examples above, transnational women’s organizing may also ensue from radically different logics, with differing scalar implications in terms of extent, coverage, and boundedness -- for instance, hemispheric, continental, world regional, or trans-local. A scalar approach thus suggests that we take stock of such “varieties of transnationalism”, and that we inquire into the diverse logics that shape the concrete spatialities of women’s movement transnational organizing.

Another central issue raised by a scalar approach to transnational movement organizing is that of the inequality of access and participation of differently-placed people to the (generically understood) transnational scale of activism. One of the salient characteristics of transnational networks, Flusty suggests, may reside in the irregularity of the spatial dispersion of their participants (2004:10). Studying the Indymedia network, Mamadouh remarks “that despite its

truly global reach, the network is rooted in some places more than others. All continents are represented, but the distribution is skewed. (...) [with] three-quarters of the sites (96 sites) for the global North." (2004: 493) As transnationalization involves organizing over vast geographic expanses, it requires from movement organizers and network participants to resolve the problems posed by distance : transnationalization necessitates capacities for time-space compression. This refers to the contraction of time (through increased speed) and space (through increased mobility) enabled by recent economic, political and technological developments. Yet, as Massey aptly remarks, "time-space compression has not been happening for everyone in all spheres of activity." There is a "power-geometry of time-space compression" she argues: it needs to be differentiated socially and spatially (1994: 148, 149).

The means of time-space compression are unequally distributed between people and places. Regarding the capacity to use the Internet for information-age transnational activism, Mamadouh, for instance, points to the existence of the (well-documented) "gendered digital divide," as well as to a "technological divide" between techies and ordinary participants and to a spatial divide "between a wired North and a poorly wired South" (2004:489). The latter evidently plays out in the geographical unevenness of the Indymedia network. It also does in the Zapatismo transnational network studied by Johnston, shaping power differentials between a privileged elite's "easy access to electronic information network and *Chiapaneco* struggles where participants are primarily indigenous and do not have access to computers" (2003: 96). In addition, differences in the means of physical mobility between a cosmopolitan group of "mobile 'global' activists" who enjoy the privileges of financial resources and the ability and freedom to travel internationally, and more place-bound actual or potential participants have also been noted in studies of transnational movement organizations and networks (Routledge, 2003; Johnston, 2003; Conway, 2005) as well as in transnational women's movement organizing (Basu, 2000a cited in Desai, 2002:31).

Thus place - but also positionality in those places as there are elites in the South and underprivileged "others" in the North - plays a role in shaping a variety of power differentials which have consequences for transnational movement organizing in terms of network density and spatial dispersion, in terms of the scalar reach of networks and of the kind of places that are linked together. They also have consequences for who can participate in transnational networks and events. As Manisha Desai notes, "women from the North and educated women from the South are more dominant in the international networks and NGOs than are grassroots women. Of the 30 000 women present at Beijing, more than 8000 were from the United States alone." (2002:31) Place, or more exactly positionality in socially and geographically differentiated places quite clearly raises issues of access and participation, suggesting the existence of, and the necessity to inquire into spatial and scalar limits to transnational women's movement organizing.

### ***B) The multiscalar character of transnational organizing and action***

Scales, human and political geographers tell us, are not discrete entities that can be studied apart from one another. As Brenner notes, in a much quoted passage, "the meaning, function, history and dynamic of any geographical scale can only be grasped relationally, in terms of its upwards, downwards, and sideways links to other geographical scales situated within tangled scalar



hierarchies and dispersed interscalar networks” (2001: 605). In short, scales are relational. Processes being deployed at one scale may be influenced by, and may have a direct relationship to similar, or to different processes occurring at other scales. Miller rejects the “one-scale” lens of much social movement research, arguing that “it would be difficult to imagine a compelling analysis of collective action that considered only one geographic scale. Looking at the world through the lens of only one geographic scale,” he adds, “might well capture the processes that tend to exhibit variation at that scale, but would miss significant processes manifest at both larger and smaller scale.” (Miller, 2000:166) Social movement processes, as we know, are not limited to only one scale. Social movements organize and act at a variety of scales, of which the growth in transnational organizing is only the most recent instantiation. “What is important,” Mamadouh et al. argue, “is to understand the coexistence of multiple scales” (2004: 457). Thinking of transnational organizing and action through a multiscalar, rather than a uni-scalar lens directs our attention towards exploring the linkages between “the transnational” and other scales of movement activity. How are transnational organizing and activity involving relationships with other scales? What kind of interscalar arrangements and dynamics are at play in these relations?

I would like, first, to open up the analysis to the possibility that transnational movement organizations and networks themselves involve more than one scale of organizing. The multiscalar character of women’s movement transnational organizing, it is important to note, may be difficult to appreciate from current feminist works, such as Moghadam’s (2005), that focus almost solely on the supra-, trans- or international dimension of organization. Surely, such focus enables us to see how women’s movement actors come together to create cross-border organizations and networks, how they mobilize the resources necessary to their functioning, produce diagnostic analyses and plans of action, disseminate information throughout the network and coordinate campaigns at the transnational scale. Yet, Moghadam’s rendition of transnational feminist organizing is in a sense very flat: it seems to occur on a two-dimensional plane, its internal processes and relations extending mostly, if not solely, horizontally. Although Moghadam alludes to the fact that some of the transnational feminist networks she studied have regional offices (WLULM, DAWN) or member groups in different countries (AWMR, WIDE), and even link up with what she calls “local partners” (2005:13), we are told very little of this more vertical dimension of organizing. Most importantly, the links and dynamics existing between the “mother organization” and the constituent part of its network remain obscure and un-theorized. Transnational networks, I want to argue, need to be analyzed as three-dimensional phenomena.

I would like here to follow Routledge and to submit that networks are “embedded in different places at a variety of spatial scales” through their member organizations, which become “links of various length in the network.”. Further, the “different geographic scales (global, regional, national, local)” of the constituent parts of a network, and the network itself, Routledge suggests, “are mutually constitutive” (2003: 336). Within the geography literature on scale and transnational movements, Mamadouh’s case study of Indymedia demonstrates the multiscalar organization and the mutually constitutive character of the scales of this network. Local web sites cover local protests for local audiences while highlighting their global dimension; the global website covers global issues for a global audience while reporting on local protests of global significance; “both scales [being] entwined,” Mamadouh adds, “constantly connected

through news wires and links." (2004:489)

Although not adopting the theoretical vocabulary of scale, Mendez's empirical study of the Central American Network of Women in Solidarity with Maquila Workers is helpful in providing an empirical example of how transnational women's movement networks can be seen as instances of mutually constitutive, multiscale organizing. The network is composed of autonomous women's organizations from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador (2002: 121). While the Network itself engages in information politics, disseminating data on "what happens behind the closed doors of the Maquila factories" (130), it can only do such work through the involvement of its constituent member groups who, locally, monitor labor conditions, human rights violations, and work processes within the maquiladoras for the Network. Member groups also run local programs for Maquila workers about their labor, human and civil rights as well as about violence and sexual abuse. The material developed for such action is circulated at Network meetings and, in this way, shared and made available across borders to other member groups. Activities of the Network and of its member groups are, thus, closely imbricated and, furthermore, feed into one another and are dependent unto one another -- which is a large part of what is meant by "mutually constitutive".

Although transnational movement organizing may certainly involve the existence of "professional SMOs" (Social Movement Organizations) that exist and act solely in supranational contexts, transnational movement organizations, especially in their networked form, typically involve more than one scale of organizing. Some of the questions that arise at this point for feminist scholars certainly are : What is the scalar morphology of the forms of cross-border organizing that we study when we study transnational women's movement organizing? It is an organizational structure involving international and continental platforms such as in DAWN? Or European and national organizations such as in WIDE and EWL? How strongly do transnational women's organizations privilege a supra-national (above nations) character in their activities *versus* cross-border forms of collaboration that continue to favor a national scale of operations such as does AWMR? (see Moghadam, 2005) Aren't we, rather, looking at "trans-local" cross-border linkages, such as in the case of the collaboration between the (Madison) Wisconsin Coordinating Council on Nicaragua and the (Managua-based) Nicaraguan March 8 Intercollective documented by Weber (2002)? How are the components parts of these transnational feminist networks involved in doing transnational work -- from their locally, nationally, or continentally embedded position? What kind of linkages, what division of labor, what kind of interscalar arrangements organize the life and activities of those networks? What internal tensions, if any, and what kinds of movement politics arise from such interscalar dynamics?

As the examples provided above indicate, we cannot assume that the internal operation of transnational organizations and networks is bound to the transnational scale. That they are or not, or how strongly they are is a matter of empirical research. Furthermore, the action of transnational organizations and networks is itself often multiscale : they engage in lobbying, protest and collaboration at a variety of scales. The Indymedia network, for instance, "target[s] agencies at different scales. Some are local (municipalities privatizing water networks for example); others are global, ranging from worldwide agencies such as the WTO and the World Bank to regional agencies such as the EU, NAFTA and FTAA and sometimes even one state (i.e.

the United States)." (Mamadouh, 2004: 493). Arts (2004) argues that transnational NGOs "such as Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature, Pax Christi, Oxfam and Amnesty International have become effective political players at different governance levels: local, regional, national and international." (499) Transnational feminist networks themselves, it is alluded by Moghadam, simultaneously target "local structures, national governments and global institutions" (2005: 20). An interesting avenue for research, these findings suggest, would be to inquire into the extent to which, and the ways in which transnational women's movement organizations are engaged in multiscalar action. What kind of organizational structure (and resources) can support, or hinder multiscalar activity on their part? How are member groups and other women's movement organizations at other scales enrolled and within what kind of arrangements? What kind of difficulties does the enactment of such multiscalar activism encounter? And how effective is it?

The literature on movements, scale and transnationalism also points to the multiscalar character of a variety of transnational events. Caravans and global campaigns, such as the ones organized by People's Global Action (Routledge, 2003), protests and counter-summits like the one against the 2003 WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun (Mamadouh et al., (2004), and conferences such as the World Social Forum (Conway, 2005) create "spaces of convergence" (Routledge, 2003) where the scales of the local and the global, the national and the transnational, the regional and even the body (Mamadouh et al., 2004: 455) become entwined in multiscalar politics. These events, where activists are permitted to participate "regardless of the spatial scale at which they operate" are, Conway underlines, "a noteworthy departure from the practice of U.N.-sponsored gatherings," which privileges representation on a national basis, as well as from "conventional coalition practices" privileging "collaboration among groups at matching scales." (Conway, 2005:8) Transnational "days of action", in which protests or other political initiatives take place simultaneously or sequentially "in different locations across the globe" (Routledge, 2003: 341), also function as convergence spaces that "facilitate an intermingling of scales of political action" (356) in the discourses and practices of differently grounded-- space, scale and place-wise -- participant organizations. Events related to the 2000 Women's World March or the 2005 Relay of Women's Charter for Humanity would offer feminist scholars an excellent opportunity for such a multiscalar analysis. How have such interactions, and such intermingling between scales of feminist action been facilitated through these events? With what kinds of consequences for participants and for organizers? For the course of the event and for its outcomes?

Finally, carrying out and sustaining cross-border, multiscalar politics -- be it in network, coalition, or event format -- is not, however, without intrinsic problems. For a large part, these have to do with bringing together and coordinating social movement actors anchored in different scales of organizing. "Geographical dilemmas arise in the attempt to prosecute multiscalar politics," Routledge writes, "because activists tend to be more closely linked to the local, national or regional movements in which their struggles are embedded than to international networks." (2003: 343) As this author shows in the case of People's Global Action, in a context of limited resources (time, energy, finances), the immediate imperatives of everyday, place-based struggles may jostle uneasily with parallel commitments to transnational engagement. Dufour and Giraud make similar comments in their study of the Women's World March of 2000, highlighting some of the practical difficulties and tensions (2004: 31) that arise, for grassroots activists, from such attempts at multiscalar organizing and mobilization.

### C) *Transnationalizing frames of collective action*

*Collective action frames* are discursive matrixes constructed by movement actors to make sense of social relations and endow them with meaning with the purpose of guiding action. "Collective action frames (...) (a) construct a social grievance by defining an existing condition as unjust (*name*), (b) attribute blame for the grievance, identifying a target of collective response (*blame*), and (c) suggest responses or solutions to the grievance (*claim*)."<sup>1</sup> (Kurtz, 2003: 894, my italics) One of the main arguments of the geography literature on scale and social movements is the embeddedness of such framings in the specificities of place. As social relations of gender, class, ethnicity, etc. are deployed in time and space, they shape places through distinct articulations, layers and "mixtures of wider and more local social relations," as we have seen with Massey (1994:156). In doing so, they produce material realities that are both similar, in the sense that they are related to similar processes, and different in the specificity of their historical and geographical instantiations. Place matters for movement politics because, on the one hand, of the differing realities in which collective actors are embedded in -- speaking from and speaking about -- and, on the other hand, as Soyez contends, because the discourses in which issues are framed are produced within "geographically differentiated assignments of meaning." To capture these variations, he offers the notion of "regional discourse formations" (2000: 12, 13) anchored in the material and cultural specificities of place (as a spatial unit of analysis which is not confined to "the local"). A similar point is made by Miller (2000: 171), who argues that "place-specific circumstances" lead to the construction of collective action frames - of identity construction, problem identification, diagnostic analyses, and claims-making processes - "which vary from place to place" (60). If framings are place-based, it follows that they may not be expected "to be equally efficacious everywhere" (23).

A second major argument in this literature is that frames themselves are scaled. As we have seen in the first section of this paper, one of the ways to understand scale is to see it as "the focal setting at which spatial boundaries are defined for a specific social claim, activity, or behavior." (Agnew, 1997:100) In this sense, there is always a "scalar narrative" (Mamadouh, 2004: 484; Conway, 2005: 4) - that is, a reference to a certain spatial deployment of social relations and to its spatial boundaries - underlying the collective action frames produced by movement actors. Kurtz further suggests distinguishing between scales of problem identification and scales of problem resolution, the first type of scalar narrative involving "the discursive practices that construct (...) the scale at which a social problem is experienced," and the second referring to "the scale(s) at which it could be politically addressed or resolved." (2003: 894). Scales of problem identification and scales of problem resolution may or may not (need not) be necessarily congruent.

For the geography literature on transnational social movements and scale, the analytical questions that arise when collective actors "upscale" and engage in transnational alliance formation are thus "what actually occurs when distant partners, who grew up in regions with totally different discourse formations, come into contact with each other?" (Soyez, 2000: 13) How do transnational organizations and networks negotiate the constitution of increasingly spatially stretched, higher scale discursive frames with the place-based movement actors that constitute these organizations and networks or participate in transnational events? And with

regards to more strategic concerns, how to find a common ground and how to “effectively create alternative imagined communities of solidarity (...) when the scale is broadened to this extent”? (Johnston, 2003: 94)

When collective actors “upscale” and “go transnational”, they produce qualitatively different discursive framings that attempt to mutualise resistant place-based identities and claims while setting these at a higher scale -- supranational, international, global, planetary, etc. Arts (2004), for instance, convincingly demonstrates how transnational activism around biodiversity, human rights, and forest stewardship has successfully challenged prior definitions of these issues – previously thought of as local, or national, and responded to at these scales – and reframed them as global ones. Furthermore, in this process scales are linked up : local problems are shown to have a global cause, and needing to be (also) tackled at the supranational or even global scale. Feldman, for her part, shows how the transnationalization of collective action by indigenous groups has been accompanied by a scalar reframing of their constituency as Indigenous Peoples of the World. With the 1975 Port Alberni Statement, she writes, "a new constituency of over 300 million people and a new map of the world" were born, "rendered both distinct and unified within a collective consciousness of nations and peoples who have entered centuries of colonial subjugation. (...) These '(re-)imagined communities' of indigenous nations and peoples opened up a whole new set of possibilities" for collective action (2002: 36). Transnational feminist organizations or events, such as the World March of Women of 2000, also attempt to upscale issues, to mutualise grievances and claims and to represent a broad constituency of women spanning a wide variety of place-based collectivities. Yet, such transnational framing processes are not without tensions.

As Feldman indicates, there are, indeed, intrinsic difficulties associated with ‘going transnational’ and trying to “represent the needs, interests, and visions of such a diverse array of peoples” (2002:36). Two difficulties are highlighted in the geographical literature: one related to the effect of power differentials on representation, and the other to the dynamics of constructing transnational framings with and among differently emplaced actors. First, the existence of unifying, transnational frames in the social movement sector, from the “We are all Marcos” of the Zapatismo Network (Johnston, 2003) to the “Global Feminism” of the transnational feminist networks studied by Moghadam (2005) tends, Johnston (2003) suggests, to obscure power relations between participants. As previously underlined in this paper, there is unequal access and participation to transnational movement organizing, resulting from power differentials between differently positioned and place-based potential participants regarding the means of time-space compression. Such unequal access and participation have a direct bearing on the framing of claims in TSMOs : they determine whose voices are, practically, in a position to contribute to the processes of transnational frame construction. In addition to affecting participation, power differentials and differences in organizational resource bases may locate actual participants “in distinct (more or less powerful) ways in relation to the flows and interconnections involved in the functioning of [transnational] resistance networks.” (Routledge, 2003: 337). These remarks speak directly to questions of discursive dominance and marginalization. Whose voices are heard? Whose are ignored or silenced? Whose claims are included or excluded? What exactly is mutualised and on whose terms? Such questions are quite familiar to feminists, having been attuned in the last few decades to issues of difference and power stemming from positionality and othering practices.

Second, work by Conway (2005) and Featherstone (2003) clearly shows how “place” plays a role in the construction of transnational framings. For Conway, the travels of the World Social Forum from Porto Alegre to Mumbai and the multiplication of social forums at a variety of scales illustrate the “significance of the territoriality of the (...) event in determining who participated in what numbers, the themes, issues and alternatives under discussion, and the horizon of possible futures.” (4) The notable presence of Indian movements of poor people, indigenous peoples and untouchables at the Mumbai event considerably transformed the character of the participation to the WSF – previously a “primarily light-skinned affair of the middle-class and non-poor”. (10) Such participation “forced ecological questions at the center” (10) of an agenda that had so far privileged issues of economic justice and fair trade. It also emphasized subsistence rights and religious identity, and challenged the modernization discourses shared by most Western antiglobalisation participants. “The political vocabulary of the WSF Charter of Principles,” she writes, was considerably enriched in Mumbai, with “the inclusion of patriarchy, militarism, work, racism, casteism and religious communalism.” (10)

There is very little indication in Conway of the political dynamics that accompanied these transformations of the WSF transnational frame in Mumbai. Other works suggest that there exists a definite tension between the rootedness of locally, regionally or nationally emplaced collective actors and the truly transnational span and reach (ideally) desired from transnational framings. Examining the case of the Inter-Continental Caravan in London, Featherstone (2003) explicitly focuses on these tensions and on their effects on the transnationalization of identities and claims among participants.

The Inter-Continental Caravan for Solidarity and Resistance brought, in 1999, “450 representatives of grassroots movements from the South and East” (Brazil, Nepal, India) to Western Europe. The Caravan “emerged from transnational networks” and attempted to create transnational solidarities against neoliberalism and biotechnologies with Northern environmental activists and organizations. In London, Featherstone argues, the Caravan’s process of constructing a common frame of action was highly contentious, and “was decisively shaped by the Karnataka State Farmer’s Union” of India (2003: 406), albeit in contradictory ways. With a contingent of 400 representatives, the KSFU articulated Indian nationalist identities and understandings of neoliberal globalization that “did not allow positive identifications to be constructed with others struggling against similar power geometries” (in particular with Nepal) (415). Yet the emplacement of Indian activists allowed for more productive framings to be shared, for instance around the issue of genetically modified seeds. Adopting their slogan “No patents on life” enabled the Caravan as a whole to move away from European-based prior concerns with “‘the threat of mixing’ and other disruptions of the imagined ‘purity’ of the plants” marred by an undercurrent of eugenics. (2003: 416) Bringing together a constellation of geographically emplaced actors, grievances and visions of the world is “both a condition of possibility for these transnational alliances,” Featherstone concludes, and at the same time “exert[...] pressure on the formation of solidarities.” (404)

These examples suggest that a stronger focus on the role of place in transnational framings would enhance such feminist analysis as Giraud’s (2001), who brilliantly highlights the challenges of constructing a consensual political platform in the organization of the 2000 World March of Women to represent “the juridical, political, economic and social needs of women of

the world" (147). These examples also suggest that the positions of privilege of Western-based actors regarding time-space compression and organizational resources do not necessarily or always translate into discursive dominance. In the organization of the 2000 Women's World March, women from the South were not the "weaker" voices in a complex dynamic of alliance and compromise that ended up watering down or even silencing the more radical elements of the Western feminist project -- contraception, abortion, and lesbian rights (Giraud, 2001: 147, 149). Although other cases do speak of Western dominance (see for instance Hrycak, 2002), it must be recognized that structural power differentials have a non deterministic character. Empirical analyses of the production of feminist transnational framings, it follows, cannot assume Western dominance and need to attend to the politics of frame construction. Routledge argues that "Successful international alliances have to negotiate between action that is deeply embedded in place, i.e. local experiences, social relations and power conditions, and action that facilitates broad transnational coalitions." (2003: 336) Such negotiations, it must be kept in mind, may unfold in a variety of ways. Existing transnational frames may be the result of "unhindered diffusion", "blending" or "hybridization", as well as from "voluntary or imposed adoption", "conflict", marginalization or exclusion (Soyez, 2000: 14). Accordingly, analyses of the construction of feminist transnational framings should interrogate the production of hegemony, compromises and innovations in these encounters between differently positioned and emplaced women, perspectives and interests.

Furthermore, conscious strategies may be developed by movements actors in their effort to reach across space and places to create common ground at the transnational scale. "Such bridge building," Miller writes, "is by no means an easy task" as it requires, "meaningful dialogue among multiple, geographically differentiated lifeworlds that do not necessarily share common views, values, or experiences." (2000: 65, 66) The geography literature suggests here that the difficulties and dilemmas of transnational bridge building across spaces, places and scales of movement organizing are productively tackled through a politics of difference of recognition (Johnston, 2003; Routledge, 2003; Conway, 2005). Enacting such politics means acknowledging the existence of inequalities and privileges among movement participants (Johnston, 2003), as well as recognizing "the specificity of struggles arising from particular places" (Conway, 2005: 1) in movements' internal politics of frame construction. Unifying, transnational frames, it is suggested by Routledge (2003) and Conway (2005), work better in terms of fostering inclusiveness and solidarity if they respect place-based difference. Such inclusiveness seems to be facilitated when unifying frames -- such as the platform of the 2000 World March of Women (Giraud, 2001) -- are also explicitly open to interpretation "by participants movements in the context of their differing local realities" (Routledge, 2003: 338). Unity-creating strategies, as well as the historical dynamic of interaction, respect and mutual learning between differently-placed movement actors must, therefore, also be taken into account in our analysis of continuity and change in transnational feminist framings.

Finally, from the remarks made so far about the role of place, and in the light of what seems to be the intractability of place-based framings in the production of transnational frames, we cannot readily assume that existing feminist transnational framings are fully able to "transcend" place-based particularisms (as Moghadam, 2005 would like us to believe). That such transcendence exists is an empirical question that neither constructions of "global feminism" nor of "human rights" framings of women's issues should escape. That such transcendence or that

truly “universal” framings are effectively possible at the transnational scale should not be taken for granted. Rather, it should remain an open and debated question.

### *Conclusion*

Scale, it must be clear by now, is not coterminous with “level”. Whereas understandings of scale proceed from a very sophisticated field of theorizing, the notion of level is, more often than not, left un-theorized. Usually, it either implicitly refers to some kind of scaffolding of fixed “planes” on which movement politics are played out within broader political engagements or, alternately and more narrowly, “to vertical orderings of interdependent political-administrative units” (Arts, 2004: 501) related to various forms and types of “state spaces”. In the former usage of the term, thinking in terms of levels does not offer any way of evoking the idea of expanding and contracting of social relations and processes that is conceptualized through scale. “Level”, as it appears, is not a geographical concept and, therefore, cannot capture spatial deployments and their implications. The notion of level may, however, remain useful in its narrower understanding -- that is, as an element in an ordering of units of government or governance -- where it may be coupled to (and not confused with) scale. Transnational social movements and transnational women’s movements do address different levels of government (or governance). Like any other processes, political processes of government and governance stretch over (variable and bounded) expanses of spaces. There is, thus, a scalar dimension to those political-administrative units that we sometimes call “levels” : they come with their own scales of regulation. Yet, representing constituencies at different levels of political-administrative regulation (with different implications to be expected, consequently, in terms of the scale of outcomes) is only one part of what transnational women’s movement organizations, networks and events do.

In this paper, I have explored and attempted to clarify how thinking in terms of scale, with the help of recent developments in human and political geography, could contribute to building a research agenda for studying transnationalization in women’s movements. Specific questions arise when geographers look at social movements and transnationalization using a constructionist perspective on scale. Using such literature and a few selected examples from current feminist work on transnational women’s movement activity, I have tried to chalk out the lines of inquiry that this work suggests for scholars interested in approaching the transnationalization of women’s movements through the lens of scale (and space, and place), and to demonstrate both their interest and relevance. Let me briefly sum up this research agenda.

Developing a scalar approach to studying transnationalization in women’s movements, I have suggested, means turning our attention to the different processes that constitute collective action -- organizing, action, claims-making -- as these processes are extended across borders and over ever wider expanses of space, as well as to the difficulties and dilemmas that arise in such endeavour. Taking on board the constructionist view of scale of human and political geography implies that such research cannot rely on a conception of the transnational scale as fixed or pre-given to movement action. Because scale does not exist in itself but only as a property of process, our analysis must attend to the ways in which women’s movement actors construct themselves at the transnational scale and, in doing so, construct “the transnational” as a scale of women’s



movement organizing, action, and claims-making. To paraphrase Swyngedouw, our “[analytical] priority, therefore, never resides in a particular geographic scale, but rather in the process[es] through which particular scales become [...]constituted” (1997b:14). In this regard, I have suggested in this paper that our analysis should inquire into the historical dynamics and triggers of the transnationalization of women’s movements in its specific instantiations, as well as into the material and discursive construction of the transnational scale of women’s movement activity in a way that sheds light on the various logics that account for the wide spatial (and scalar) variations noted in women’s movement transnationalism. The role of place and positionality in shaping the density, dispersion, reach and limits of transnational women’s movement organizing also needs to be assessed and more fully documented. Transnationalization, furthermore, is not occurring in a void but as part of a multi-scalar world of movement organizing and movement politics. Part of our research agenda is thus, certainly, to explore the interscalar arrangements, interactions, dynamics and difficulties that are involved in the organizational life and activities of transnational feminist organizations and networks. Linkages between the transnational and other scales of women’s movement struggle need to be elucidated while illuminating the dynamic and changing character of relations between such scales. Finally, how do feminist collective action frames change as women’s movements not only “upscale”, but attempt to mutualise an increasingly wide array of place-based constituencies, identities, grievances and claims? How is difference negotiated? What kind of strategies and power relations are at play? And with what kinds of outcomes and/or consequences for the production of unifying frames at the transnational scale? These are the kind of questions that should guide our future inquiries.

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# TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD: A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

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## *Introduction*

Globalization is not only a competition for market shares and for economic growth well-timed initiatives; neither is it only a matter of trade opportunities and liberalization. Globalization has also evolved into a social and political struggle for imposing cultural values and individual preferences (Beck, 2003; Dollfus, 1997; Laïdi, 1997; Santos et al., 1994). The current global economic system optimizes the values and criteria of performance, efficiency and productivity; nowadays performance defines the new *locus* of belonging of the global subjects, who ought to live on accomplishing short-term responsibilities at any cost. Being efficient and cultivating performance has become the new global avatar for the myth of progress and development; global performance provides a new sense of universality to national communities (Dupas, 2001; Rist, 1996). It goes without saying that such an over-evaluation of economic performance in general human activities that one can find in discourses of many economic global players has direct implications for democratic life. According to this viewpoint, political negotiations must also follow the pattern of efficiency and thus fall within the timetable of the market; there should be no room for doubt and long deliberation in the global risk society.

This global economic shift has major consequences on the development of social movements. As Della Porta and Tarrow (2005) have asserted, two concurrent processes underpin globalization: the internationalisation of politics through the emergence of transnational actors, networks, and institutions, and the economic integration produced by the giddy growth of international trade, the media, and financial integration. In this sense, globalization itself favours the expression of international contestation by creating opportunity structures and favouring circumstances for the acts of anti/alternative globalization movements. Thanks to its technological support system, globalization facilitates rapid and immediate intercommunication, which can hardly be under the strict control of the state. Moreover, globalization increases opportunities and, at the same time, (re) produces social and economic inequalities among and within countries.

In this context, the political mobilisation of Brazilian social movements against the globalization process not only targets the capitalist principles of market liberalisation or the negotiations of a trade agreement in the Americas. Likewise, after the demonstrations against economic globalization in Seattle, Prague, Nice, Genoa, and especially after the successive World Social Forums (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Mumbai, and in many other cities around the world, the so-called alternative globalization movements have turned from a logic of reflection and debate into a dynamics of resistance and contestation against the global political and economic *status quo*. The four editions of the WSF between 2001 and 2005 that were organized in Brazil showed that transnational networks of social movements intended to go beyond mere street demonstrations and further discuss with other alterglobalist players possible alternatives in their fight for global social justice (Fougier, 2002; Milani and Keraghel, 2006). However, the growing development of transnational social movements also stems from the frustration of citizens complaining concomitantly about the democracy deficit at two levels: nation-wide and globally<sup>1</sup>. These movements are particularly revealing in the current world politics where the classical clear-cut distinctions between the domestic and foreign policies, high and low politics, hard and soft power, tend to melt into thin air.

Taking into account this broader context of globalization and its different dimensions, and the political opportunity structures that emerged from a wider world social mobilisation (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005), this paper will focus the second level of this democracy deficit. We adopt the following assumption: transnational networks of social movements are the expression of a new social subject and have shifted their scale of political intervention since the 1990's in order to render their fight for social justice politically pertinent. Global social justice has become the motto of transnational social movements in a world politics where political decisions are not any more exclusively reliable on nation-states. In pursuance of developing this assumption, we will approach the discussion in two general parts: firstly, we will present a theoretical and methodological approach for analysing transnational social movements; secondly, we will look into the World Social Forum as one of their key political expressions.

## 2- Analytical categories of collective action in transnational social movements

Alter-globalization protests in global cities since Seattle have not been an isolated, spontaneous series of events but rather a conscious tactic of an increasingly coordinated and powerful social movement against economic and financial globalization that often targets international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Through these protests, and particularly by means of the series of Forums organized since the first edition of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001, transnational networks, coalitions and movements attempt to transform both domestic political systems and international politics: they create or stir new international agenda issues, mobilize new constituencies, alter understandings of interests and identities, and sometimes change state practices (Khagram et al., 2002).

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<sup>1</sup> In the particular case of social movements in Europe, we should also integrate a regional (European) political scale wherein networks strike their strategies and challenge regulations and decisions from Brussels.

As we will analyse further down in the first part of the article, there are, however, some questions that remain open: can transnational social movements be autonomous from national constraints in their building of discourses, strategies and power resources? Can the shift of scale (from local and national to global and transnational) also bring about a change of culture and identity to these movements as a social subject? Providing answers to these questions implies taking into consideration, at least, three orders of transformations that alter-globalization movements face nowadays: the re-definition of politics and the political; the social subject in a world of transnationalization; and the search for convergences in the formation of transnational solidarities.

## **2.1- Re-defining politics and the political**

In a globalizing economy, the state has no longer the same exclusive and traditional role it used to have in international relations; non-state actors have gradually brought together an important say in global affairs. The political context within globalization represents unprecedented breaches in power equations among states, markets and civil societies. Globalization defines the new modalities in the management of historical change (Dwivedi, 2001; Therborn, 2000; Touraine, 2005). With the globalization phenomenon there comes a series of transgressions of national frontiers by flows of technology, economy, culture, and information, but also several trespassing actions by non-state actors, be they infra-national political players or global networks and organisations. At the same time, transnational problems of major relevance to the system-wide functioning of the world (such as financial crises, trans-frontier environmental degradation, forced migration, drug trafficking, the spread of genetically-modified organisms, civic alliances for human rights, and so forth) transcend the responsibility of the single monolithic nation-state, and represent a major challenge that can hardly be dealt with only within the framework of intergovernmental relations.

As a result, there is a profound redefinition of the political field, both in the configuration of the political (the context) and in the way politics evolves as experience, method and practice (the action). It is not possible any more to understand the political only as a discrete set of governing institutions and policies, including states, multinational firms, international agreements and intergovernmental organisations, whereas politics does not happen exclusively where are located those subjects who possess power to rule over others (Osterweil, 2004). As reminds John Rawls (2002), there is a need to conceive the political in a sociological and a descriptive sense; the political can be opposed to the non-political as the public can be confronted with the private. In the political field the principle of an individual's basic liberties is under threat; the political is fundamentally a non-elected and mandatory human gathering where institutions exercise domination and coercion over subjects from birth to death. In the rawlsian sense the political field requires principles of justice and calls for fundamental rules to monitor social relationships. Therefore, it differs from the associative and voluntary sector, from family and personal ties, which are fields of sensitiveness and affection in a sense that is totally strange to politics. This does not imply of course an absolute separation between the political and the non-political fields; however, it is in the political field where there are what, based on David Hume, Rawls calls the "circumstances of justice" which require the application of a "political conception of justice" (Rawls, 2002).



This conception of the political field allows us to avoid over-estimating the role of the contemporary context when analysing actions of political subjects; however, it also entails an awareness of politics where agents and their strategies are largely informed by contextual structures, actors, processes and values. In terms of structures, the political field bears the marks of profound tensions between fluidity and rigidity, between the horizontality of transnational flows and the institutionalized hierarchies of (inter) governmental interactions, between relationships of solidarity of a stateless character and relationships of citizenship as synonymous with nationality, between shared beliefs and legal norms of public international law. At the heart of such tensions lies the crisis of the traditional representative democracy and the process of de-monopolisation of the Prince in the production of public goods. Because the nation-state and international bureaucracies lack political legitimacy in the management of world affairs, citizens do not accept the absolute transfer of sovereignty in decision to their representatives. They pose questions related to who governs and how, and on behalf on whom; that means that rooted in an ideal of social justice citizens question the legitimacy of decisions taken within the framework of contemporary representative democracy also at the global level. As a result of a protracted process that began with the failure of authorities to fulfil their commitments, citizens do not have a sufficient loyalty to representative institutions any more.

Moreover, the spatial dimension of structures tends to change. Global social movements share the same transnational zone, use the same technological resources and call into question the monopoly of the state in world politics; their strategies are virtually “de-territorialized”. This does not mean that they do not use a territory, but they occupy a territorial *continuum* running from local to national to global, thus contributing to the emergence of a transnational social space (Ameraux, 1999; Pries, 2001). Their political identity is therefore located beyond the national frontier (this differs, for example, from the social movements of the nineteenth century) and can be explained by a triple shift in the structure of the political: from the public to the private, from the national to the transnational and from the nation-state to nongovernmental actors. Consequently, concepts such as the public space and the public good unfetter their original meanings<sup>2</sup>, and the notion of a public realm encompasses both state and society, and draws the line instead between private and public interests. In this context, international arenas such as the World Social Forum are key meeting places of distinct forms of organisations; they are new political spaces where vertical and horizontal hierarchies meet, where there is also a clash of political purposes.

Two other critical factors play a role in the re-definition of the political in its structures. First, the local-global nexus that allows avoiding localism as a theory or an ideology, which ignores the global dimension of struggles, the multilevel and multidimensional expressions of today’s social, political, environmental, and economic issues. The agenda that favours the de-linking platform remains an ambiguous celebration of the local. As asserts Dwivedi (2001), two

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of radical environmental movements, for instance, collective actions signal conflicts and crises in the material and physical bases of life; as recalls Dwivedi (2001), because these movements question the vary basis of relationships between man, society, nature and the market, they may be defined both as public and political actions of protest, resistance and reconstruction around environmental alteration, degradation and destruction.

arguments may be advanced in support of the local-global nexus: the first is derived from the social movement theory, whose literature tends to view movements as actors but in the sense of networks, action-systems and cognitive spaces. It is important to notice that these movements span the local and the global, geographically and politically: they may at the same time strike a local action, a national fight and a global struggle. Second, in this change of structures of the political field, the epistemic dimension, the power-knowledge nexus, is of crucial relevance: the struggle of transnational social movements is also over meanings and knowledge, not only on material resources. One key challenge that these moving structures of the political put forward is to take cognisance of knowledge claims and interests in the action of social movements beyond the purview of locality and materiality, because social movements are reflexive, generate consciousness and awareness of economic inequalities, social despoliation, and environmental risks (Dollfus, 1997; Dwivedi, 2001; Khagram et al., 2002). One example is the case of human rights activists who mobilize shame and publicize international norm breaking as a political strategy (Ameraux, 1999).

The political field is also marked by the presence of a myriad of voices, shifting what social transformations look like. There is a clear increase in relevance of non-state actors who develop a new form of political engagement and new languages of politics. In the case of transnational environmental activists, for instance, they may create, strengthen, implement, and monitor international norms; they may be sources of resistance from below to globalization that challenge the authority and practices of states and international institutions that shape the parameters for global governance. They herald the notion of a diffused political leadership deploying typical resources of soft power<sup>3</sup>.

Global social movements also act transnationally in order to generate domestic outcomes, but they mainly aim at changing practices and influencing ideas and norms in world politics. Some of them expect that the use of information, persuasion, and moral pressure should contribute to changes in international institutions and mechanisms of global governance. Others deploy and engage competing justifications as a political process, becoming true moral entrepreneurs in instigating campaigns around particular issues. The Narmada Movement in India, for example, as a coalition of local, national, and international non-state organisations has been able to reform and even stall the construction of a huge set of large dams on the Narmada River; huge dams are not any more a symbol of development and modernity, and are now considered as controversial and unsustainable projects of infrastructure (Khagram et al., 2002; Roy, 2003) <sup>4</sup>.

WSF members claim for the radicalization of democracy on a world scale and fight for an increased political participation in the forming of public opinions and in decision processes. This

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<sup>3</sup> Some analysts think that they fall within the category of a global civil society, and show the development of a global citizenship. We do not agree to this viewpoint. See, for instance, Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalisation: A Critical Introduction*. London: Macmillan 2000.

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to notice that Khagram et al. (2002) develop a typology of transnational collective action and contentious politics: international NGOs (who coordinate their tactics through campaigns), transnational advocacy networks (who mainly act through information exchange), and transnational social movements (who also organize joint mobilisation).

request for an increased political participation by alterglobalists is related to the present crisis in multilateralism: USA's unilateralism and the partiality of the rules of the international system are making a decisive contribution to calling into question the idea of international community. Through this claim, transnational social movements and networks can influence the process of democratization of the global order: in this sense, a social movement's effectiveness in bringing about social change is linked to its ability to disrupt or threaten the order set up within the international system (Tarrow, 1998). Transnational social movements may also profit from institutional breaches in order to create their political opportunity structures. The same way that the American superpower does not follow the international rules and implements its own unilateral decision in relation to Rio de Janeiro's convention on biological diversity, the Kyoto protocol on climate change or the invasion of Iraq, transnational social movements question and protest against international agencies on behalf of their ideal of global social justice.

As far as processes are concerned, it is true that global politics is nowadays characterized by complex decision-making system where state and non-state actors intervene by means of their distinct power resources (formal representation, investments, finance, technological upgrade, information production, culture, symbols) from local to global levels. This de facto complexity can be opposed to a de jure simplicity of the formal rules of intergovernmentalism, which implies a re-discussion of the legitimacy of decisions taken within governmental spheres, but also power distribution between those who govern and those who are governed, negotiation processes between groups of actors and stakeholders, as well as decentralisation of key authorities and functions of those who are the central actors (mainly governments and international financial institutions). International Relations literature describes this phenomenon as complex multilateralism, heterarchic governance, and multi-level structures of transnational governance (Badie, 1995; Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992; Smouts, 1998; Young, 1999). In the political theory, the normative approach to a deliberative democracy would best correspond to the ideal of a public space where political actors are in an almost constant process of definition of substantive rules and democratic procedures (Manin, 1985; Habermas, 1997).

These changes in the political also bring in new blood to the definition of democracy itself. If democracy is founded on plurality of opinions and this plurality depends at the same time on the plurality of values, it cannot survive in a society almost exclusively led by the economic market where all goods (including the global commons) are reduced to their commodity value, and where all citizens are considered only as consumers (Novaes, 2003). This is the ethical dimension of politics wherein transnational social movements intervene, since they recall that the new individualism as an exclusive guiding tenet of an international morale cannot solve the tension between the ethics of the market and the ethics of the common good. In face of a growing process of atomization of political players and fragmentation of political demands, the global market tends to consider that the idea of a democratic deliberation is excessively time-consuming, and thus restricts the public space to an informational space where publicity and marketing play a leading role. In fact, the problem is that politics may succumb if the contemporary political field does not allow for a plurality of values. As highlights Hannah Arendt (1995), politics is born when two men meet. Arendt's *vita activa* is constituted by labour (as a biological process), work (as the unnaturalness of human existence) and action (as politics

whose condition *per quam* is plurality). Politics as an intermediate space lies in human plurality, and stems from the space between free human beings. It is essentially about relationship and action; it is about inter-personal relationships. For Arendt (1995), the constant invention of politics needs a world where men and women are able to think and act with an aim of creating something new.

## 2.2- The social subject in a world of transnationalization

When analysing democracy deficit and unfulfilled social justice it is necessary to reconsider the idea of the subject in the different variations of world democratic experiences. Studies on social movements, since a few decades, have favoured a continuous *aggiornamento* of the idea of the subject as a bearer of will, identity (ies) and capabilities in relation to the different forms of contemporary collective action, which can be characterised as the entwining of subjectivity with the individual integration in the social systems. If for a long period of time the idea of social class was predominant, underrating individuality and culture, it is possible to say today that they structure the subject at the individual and collective levels. Individuals are constituted by multiple identities and cultural references (for example, values, religion, ethnicity, gender) as much as they can occupy different positions in the social systems (for example, worker, leader, politician, intellectual). This structuring complex of the actor and of the self unfolds a wide span of situations and opportunities in which the subject can take a critical or contestatory stand. The individual can develop a pattern of critical consciousness and participative action that merge by means of the diverse opportunities of manifestation that exist for the worker, man/woman, minorities, ethnic and religious groups, regionalist movements, among so many other possible references available today (Touraine, 1995).

When analysing social movements, Touraine (1999) states that, in the past few years, individuals have continuously moved towards modalities of more comprehensive movements, societal or global, supported by moral references and a militant consciousness about conflicts or issues of justice<sup>5</sup>. Even though emerging in a local or national space, movements always extend themselves to a wider scope, likewise asserting an epochal context (for example, pacifism, anti-nuclear, anti-apartheid, feminism, human rights, environmentalism, among others). As we have asserted previously, politics today is different from that of the traditional forms that dominated large part of the twentieth century, such as the union or party politics or even the nationalist politics (Wallerstein, 2004). Those forms were imprinted by objective relationships within the market and institutional power, overpowered by an instrumental logic that aimed at an imposed

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<sup>5</sup> The authors are aware of the fact that Touraine (2005) changes his viewpoint on the subject as a sociological category when he asserts that the subject is the opposite of identity and loses itself in intimacy (Touraine, 2005: 167). He affirms that the idea of the *self* has gained considerable relevance, not leaving much room for the subject as he had previously analysed. The French sociologist approaches the category of self identity based on the writings of Anthony Giddens, although he points out two main differences in his analysis of the subject: firstly, Touraine defines the subject as resisting to the impersonal world of consumerism, violence and war; secondly, the subject is never completely self identified, since a person is located in the world of rights and duties, within the order of morality and not of experience.

objectivity supported by the State and the its bureaucratic apparatus. The crisis of politics and of the subject in politics in the last decades has caused the demise of the emancipation of the working class subject as a universal one.

It is now indispensable to perceive politics and the actor as an articulation between the objectivity required by the market or the bureaucratic State and a sense of community; between instrumental reason in a complex mass society and creeds (cultural, identity, religious beliefs) in their different forms of expression. Thus, it is necessary to perceive the actor as a subject capable both of having an opinion, a utopia, and of giving sense to participation and confront against adversaries, opponents or oppressors. The latter are sometimes not only persons, but ideas and principles that are not confined into rigid ideological systems, as were the revolutionary ideologies that prevailed sometime ago. As such, the relation between the subject and collective action today is pervaded by the value and the idea of liberty, combining choice (individuality) and cultural/social heritage (collectivity), establishing what Touraine (1999) calls a conflictual dialogue.

Therefore, by revolting against oppression (material or symbolic), the subject engages in a conflict against an opponent. By means of contestation and recognition of a common adversary individuals search for echoing the critical ideas and sentiments at the collective level, where the worldview merges with that of the others either because of similarities or differences. When standing for a collective goal within a social movement, the actor is not looking for a homogeneous or unitary rationality, as opposed to the arguments that supported the social class discourse that was typical of the old left. There is not even the demand for centralised strategies or tactics for the different events, as has been proved by movements of national scope, such as those involved with land conflicts in Brazil, or of transnational scope, such as the Narmada Movement or Via Campesina. This implies that the idea of the subject itself, as argued in this paper, is not bound to the principle of a full domination of the actor by the system. The new approach in relation to the subject, and of the subject about itself, has widened the struggles for banners or has promoted antagonistic dialogue situations, where economic categories such as poverty and necessity are transformed into political and moral categories plunged into convictions and values in the field of social justice; that is, they are not anymore restricted to domination and economic exploitation *tout court*.

Transnational social movements are of several modalities; what they have in common is that actors move in a context where the public life is less confined to the limits of normative formality, and collective action is more diffused and discontinued despite its power for contestation (Taylor, 1994). The subject of the collective action (participants from diverse countries) does not use a unique militant language or restrict himself/herself to a mono-causal centralised discourse. This is due to the fact that banners, slogans and issues, that are quite often originated in the local sphere, extrapolate to the transnational one, asserting multiple and tolerant identities (Della Porta, 2005). Social movements contemplate the idea of substantive liberty, which fulfils men and women objectively and subjectively as a social subject, and allows them to fight against deprivation and exclusion. It is possible to say that this struggle is not only against the monopoly of power and concentration of wealth - typical of advanced capitalism - but it intends to be a constructive fight directed to changing worldviews. It aims at a better interaction between ideas/culture (subjectivity by all means) and power/wealth; sometimes

values and culture are privileged such as in fights in favour of human rights. Accordingly, the subject is, at the same time, a product of the social order and the spokesperson of a critical view of this same order - that is to say, the subject is a bearer of a will to change. The social role and the identity of the movements expose the critical aspects of capitalist domination and the opportunities to confront the power structure as possible.

Social movements are made of actors with a creative capacity and a desire to transform, thus they contribute to the debate and the outlining of the virtuousness of social justice as the foundation of societies and for transnational relationships and exchanges. Participant actors contribute to redeem the value of liberty as a basic element of emancipation, demanding that this value and its associated factors should not be understood as an abstract principle of emancipation, as it prevailed with the formation of the modern political citizen. Liberty now should be couched on and supported by experience and recognition within the social context, combining individuality and collectivity, reason and subjectivity. The virtuousness of liberty is only acquired when it is possible to live it according to the material, institutional, cultural and moral progress of society and its diversity, or as Fraser (2000) puts it, combining distribution and recognition.

The sense of contestation of transnational social movements, expressed by a critical consciousness, is not in search of simplified or excluding identities (either worker or woman); collective action promotes the development of the elements of solidarity that integrate actors, social conditions and movements (organisations), combining moral values and attitude direction. It is within the field of solidarities that affinities are recognized and conflicts are negotiated (internally and externally), embracing plurality, diversity and differentiation. It is due to this continuous dynamics between integration and conflict that the political direct action is very present in transnational events, without the pre-condition of proposing political or institutionalized solutions.

Solidarity within contemporary social movements outlines the fields of production of contestation and confrontation related to distribution and recognition as mentioned above. It works as a structuring unity of strategies for changing situations and contexts. Therefore, it is not the way the concept was approached by the classical sociology, which affirmed solidarity as the ace of cohesion for understanding society as a totality, based on social bonds of long durability, with a deterministic effect of the system over the actor. In the complex arrangements of transnational collective action the new solidarities are continuously levelled by protest and the desire for changes; they produce social bonds of reciprocity of short durability as related to the fluid and transitory relationships established through networks and punctual events. Nevertheless, the new solidarities of the social movements give an impetus to the effective diffusion of meanings (values, identities, contestation) and definition of goals (to be there, to expose banners, to demand participation), such as the transnational movements have been capable of doing so far.

### **2.3- Convergences in the formation of transnational solidarities**

One of the most relevant characters of transnational social movements is their heterogeneous composition and multiple identities structured in a fluid constitution that is made real as an

open space (Wallerstein, 2004). By analysing these movements it is possible to observe what we would like to call the structure of convergences, made of the elements that permit to explain the fluidity and diversity that make these movements a fact and display actions and actors in a continuous and renewable way within specific contexts. It is widely accepted that they have become the bearer of a unifying principle that summarizes social relationships at the micro and macro levels – that of social justice in a globalizing perspective –, articulating social consciousness and confrontation that emerge from injustice, inequalities and denied identities produced at the local levels and diffused transnationally. It is possible to say that the elements that propel convergences in the formation of these movements are structured and shaped according to some levels of materialisation of the collective action under a broad variety of specific practices. On one level, space, time, organisation, information, visibility, diffused leadership, together with the exposure of multiple identities and a wide spectrum of symbolic elements, structure convergences in the formation of transnational movements. They are the backbone of these flexible forms of collective action. On the other level, we would say, they couch new forms of solidarity that, in a loose approach to the typology of Sahlins (1976), articulate aspects of general solidarity (timeless and not accountable for) and of balanced solidarity (punctual and accountable for). We will make a few considerations about each of these topics aiming at a methodological design for the support of the study of transnational social movements.

Efforts to organize a summit or a forum are based on the understanding that, as an open space, the encounter should not be associated with any particular country or minority; the hosting country is firstly a participant, a generous one, and will offer the guest participants hospitality combined with a general logistic support and security. However, the space element is far beyond this first step of putting together an enormous contingent of people. Space provides for convergences because it approaches participants by facilitating the mutual awareness of being part of a movement in the sense that it is ‘there’ where it is possible to debate and advocate ideas directly and to do so because they also have something to say to an external public. The space of encounter provided by transnational social movements approaches the voices of the militants as opposed to the void that separates the citizen voters from their political representatives or the latter from their own constituency. In the case of the Brazilian electoral system, for example, which scatters voting through a very wide geographical region, the relationship between the constituency and its representative is almost non-existent, except for a minority which have access to the elected politician in a clear exchange of favours, typical of a more or less clientelistic approach. Space is also the moment when action, individually or group action, is put into practice as a political direct action to the extension to which the effects, results and success (or their opposite) of that political moment are possible to be observed and evaluated *in locus*, irrespective of agreements or other arrangements for future action. Thus, collective action is not only to participate but it is to do so by ‘being there’, the place where the associative logique (Pouligny, 2001) materializes in a very large scale.

Time is another important element of convergences for transnational social movements. It can be explained according to two dimensions. Firstly, it is the extended time of the political and cultural aims of these movements that have the paramount issue to fight for social justice as well as for the more radical slogans of anti-capitalism and anti-neoliberalism. In this sense time is a fluid dimension of the concrete collective action and is the non-measurable and non-immediate

condition of expected consequences or results. Secondly, time is the very present moment (somewhere and measurable); it is precisely the 'when' of communication and interaction in its immense variety; it is the face to face moment of direct politics, that is, when action and reaction are mutually perceived by those involved in individual or organized groups' participation. Basically, time and space are the first dimensions of locating transnational movements, making possible to observe their structure, strategies and content. Symbolically, transnational events are referred to by the city and the year of its occurrence just as in other world-wide organized encounters such as the Olympic games – being somewhere and everywhere every time.

Organisations contribute to the formation of transnational movements because they are the basic condition for making participation collective and viable; they are the core resource of convergences of individuals, ideas, proposals, tactics and action. They integrate the theoretical elements with the practical ones, and make it possible to transform individual convictions and motivations into collective ones. Thus, they permit to approach different views about common issues of discontent or contestation related to social justice in any possible shape (exclusion, discrimination, human rights, environmental degradation, status affirmation, etc.). They provide the capability of producing the material and symbolic resources necessary for collective action, whether on a large or a small scale. It is in the organisation that a social movement is capacitated, producing renewed values of heterarchic relationships, establishing dialogic propositions about specific issues and diffuse (educate) values and ideas (be they cultural or ideas of identity) that connect the local with the national and transnational. In relation to collective action as approached in this paper, organisations are the very first moment and *loci* of legitimating the group in society (producing acceptance, consensus or multifaceted approaches). Thus, they organize the internal with the external repertoires, empowering actors, establishing connections and integrating networks. Finally, they aspire to influence institutionalized significations and norms, and to be included in institutionalized systems or non-institutionalized situations of political activities.

The intense degree of connectivity of contemporary collective action is no doubt favoured by the communication facilities provided by modern technology, such as Internet and others. Despite the digital divide among and within countries and regions, the available technology covers, *mutatis mutandis*, most places of the global frontiers. This accelerates information and intensifies conditions for debates, exchanges and mobilisation. Nonetheless, the most significant aspect of information in relation to convergences is the building up capacity to circulate ideas and to transform contents very quickly, thus favouring what Tarrow and McAdam (2005) call relational diffusion and, consequently, a complex scale of coordinated mobilisation and organisation at the global level. Information has, we would say, a crucial role for convergences at two levels. On the intellectual one, it nurtures the capabilities for (de) constructing discourses and issues by capacitating knowledge, critical analysis and propositional attitudes. Still, it provides actors with the intellectual tools to create discernment about conflict, contention, dialogue and agreement, contributing to reshaping politics and the sense of being a political actor as discussed above. It is possible to say that it contributes, together with experience and values, to the development of expertise knowledge and to empowerment. On the practical level, information fosters purposive mobilisation, integrating actors in different scales and providing substantive platforms to join wider scenarios and deal with multiple organisation fields



(Agrikoliansky et al., 2005) and multiple political environments. That is to say, it expands political opportunities and strengthens organisations themselves.

Transnational social movements are an open space as compared to conventional organisations or to agencies; that is to say, they present a fluid structure and loose boundaries. Nonetheless, they concretely form a visible event. As an element of convergences visibility is not only part of the strategy of putting together so many issues, organisations, personalities, people and ideas. Visibility has to do with the assertion that the gathering has taken place however contentious are the ideas, banners or tactics advocated by so many different participants and militants together, providing strength to the movements. But most of all it has to do with, as we see it, legitimising social movements as an actor that cannot be ignored by governments and international agencies, those who do not dispute power and space because they are the dominant power. In this sense visibility, through confrontation or dialogue, could, eventually, facilitate the negotiation on issues that governments and agencies might consider relevant to take into account. Finally, visibility is important for convergences because it is strongly related to content transmitted by information and messages, what could be called a continuous process of attribution of similarity (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005). Actors that are present and active on the scenario send an explicit message to those who are concerned, however remotely, with the same issues and values, bridging participants and connecting supporters in an extensive network of a wide range of convictions and interests.

Diffused leadership is an innovative resource for situating power in modernity and, within the argument of the structure of convergences, it has an important contribution to explain the dynamic and mechanisms of power in the collective action under focus. We could retrace the democratisation of leadership in the experience of the new social movements that developed since the sixties, couched on values that confronted the democratic centralism of left-wing parties and unions, among other organisations, and the very tight hierarchies existing then between leaders and followers (Wallerstein, 2004). Taking politics into ones' hands has been a long thought ideal of radical politics and the critical left; not only as a potential condition for exercising power through free thought and dialogical critic, but being capable of confronting, from within, one's own organisation or group. That is to say, diffused leadership is a by-product of a new sense of politics, which widened the space for active and contestatory involvement as opposed to hierarchical and obedient politics in the tradition of republican representation as discussed above - thus, increasing the social subject's potential capacity of enacting. As a metaphor, it is possible to say that transnational social movements provide a stage for everyone through the World Social Forum, creating the transitory situation of public exposure and free saying. These, combined with an eclectic and varied scenario and the image of self presentation (from style to attitudes), express politics within the field of identity and self recognition; they also demean the role of leadership as a central figure and pervade the exclusive legitimacy of leading as such. In spite of the new configuration of politics, it is not possible to say that charisma, in the weberian sense, is dead. Charismatic figures (such as Sub-Comandante Marcos of the Zapatista movement or Arundhati Roy from India) and other constant characters in the transnational movements exist; however, in the same way of the core structure of the movements and of the new structure of politics they are fluid, less persistent, and they have a segmented influence on the movements and participants.

Structures of convergences in transnational social movements are certainly imbued by identities in their multiple forms. The affirmation of identities represents an immense advance in politics renewal, not only because its focus pervades the constraints of the universal mono-identity of the political subject (the one inherited from the advances that resulted from bourgeois democracy in opposition to the society of privilege and idleness of the *Ancien Régime*) but because it also brought about the understanding of the politics of recognition itself as argued by Fraser (2000). Elements of identity are made of values and symbolic elements that materialize in social relationships at all levels (religion, race, gender, class, nation, minorities, and so forth) and reshape and/or re-construct dialogue (Taylor, 1994). They also condition the disposure of individuals and groups in a way that confronts traditional power structures and hegemonic positions that result in exclusion or despise the importance of difference and alterity. As discussed above, political pluralism in conventional politics has been based on a subject conceived, in political philosophy, as unique in form and content, dominated by reason and with the capacity of converting will into decision. The redemption of subjectivity has emancipated the plurality of the self (as opposed to the mere plurality of representation) and reintroduced it in all aspects of social life that conform the identity of the subject. Identity now is no stranger to politics and collective action, for it provides the meaning and sense of belonging for individual action and its associative capacity to engage actors into commitments. It configures the social representation of the individual status and exposes the position of the actor in society, both in the intimate sphere and in the public sphere (Taylor, 1994). It is possible to say that identity enables awareness of the over-determination of the actor by the system on the one hand, and the reflexive condition of the actor influencing the system on the other. This makes the sense of participation in transnational collective movements connected by symbolic elements as well as meaningful relationships between actors, wherever they are and despite national, cultural and economic differences. Hence, participants from the North and South (peripheral or poor countries) recognize factors of connection that they share in the fields of cultural and political significance, by means of the relational diffusion (Tarrow and McAdam, 2005); this creates a concerted movement towards convergence of action and ideas. Identity in these movements does not require homogenous or simplified values for mutual recognition; it allows for self-representation of their own making (Fraser, 2000). As connected to the renewal of the political discussed above, multiple identities bridge and accommodate diversity and difference (Taylor, 1994), pursuing a continuous way of making sense of action and giving sense to the context (event) of its own occurrence. We could say that identity in contemporary politics, as concerning the transnational social movements, is a field of production of collective social action (on a small or large scale) in its own right, positioned in the paramount moral and political value of global social justice.

The next aspect we would like to point out for a methodological study of the structure of convergences that emerges from the analysis of transnational social movements is that of symbolic elements. They are language and comprehension itself, fusing social representation of social life, the evolution and emancipation of cultures and the received as well as constructed social meanings for men and women. As a very complex worldview (extensively qualitative) of reality and portraying the complex data (extensively quantitative) of this same reality, the symbolic elements are a fundamental ace of analysis for comprehending contemporary collective action. They express how actors feel and act in their own way of approaching

conflicting or converging views of social issues (made of values, experiences and objectivity), and are in the basis of contention. In fact, they are part of the intelligible structure of expressing politics, ideologies and action orientation, however spontaneous or objective action is. On the one hand, they materialize through signs (language or others), production (material or not), information and attitudes that are present in the act of participation (in all sector of human life); they also materialize in received and produced knowledge, in interaction through communication (dialogue, debate, contention), in the designed goals and in propositions (production, government, education, among others). On the other hand, symbolic elements are always the frame of an epochal content; they represent the issues (politics, wars, production, science, culture) that widely mobilize society or sectors of it, fleshing out the factors that better represent the aspirations of a collectivity, which could be progressist or conservative ones. Transnational social movements are allegedly related to values that, by opposing democratic deficit, injustice and neo-liberalism, present a symbolism associated to a new stage of emancipation of the subject, that which stems from the understanding of global social justice. Is it possible to think of a new virtue for the understanding of liberty, equality and solidarity (fraternity)?

We assume that, at the global level, transnational social movements have revealed new forms of social solidarity. The transformation of the subject as an objective and subjective agent of the world in a specific social context – within multiple identities, recognition and reflexivity between the actor and the social system – re-qualified the meaning and the living experience of liberty and equality. Likewise, the sense of contemporary solidarity does not restrain itself to a unilinear qualification of the systems of reciprocity and social exchanges. Of all the elements that contribute to the structuring of convergences, solidarity is probably the most complex character of the social action and social relationship. Considering our approach to Sahlins' typology (1976), we would say that the solidarity that emerges from the forms of transnational movements articulates aspects of reciprocity that produce commitments at two levels: that of general solidarity (timeless and not accountable for) and that of balanced solidarity (punctual and accountable for), entwining the elements of reciprocity on which solidarity stands: trust, co-operation and engagement<sup>6</sup>.

Solidarity in the transnational events emerges from exchanges that are certainly non-symmetric; different nations, communities and organized groups take part in the World Social Forum moved by converging identities and goals as much as by a blind degree of trust. Despite the unequal conditions of the societies of origin, participants, militants and advocates can share common perceptions and can produce actions and projected goals related to the convictions that had mobilized them in the first place. The kind of trust that make people act together on such a large scale is made possible on the same ground of the motivations that make the structure of

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<sup>6</sup> The authors are aware of the analytical principles that support Sahlins' theory of reciprocity, where bonds, obligations and generosity are essentially connected to the structure of the social order in primitive societies, an order with rooted traditions, hierarchies and assigned roles. The collective action under focus is, accordingly, the opposite model of social order: non-hierarchical, no boundaries, no obligations. However, the author's typology is extremely rich for a contribution to the understanding of 'modern bonds' and values of the political culture made possible in the social systems of contemporary democracies, especially in the case of the Brazilian historic experience that we qualified as a democratic deficit (see Laniado, 2001).

convergences materialize collective action. Trust underpins the conditions by which actors want and accept to interact with others. In this sense trust is a device for coping with the freedom of others (Gambetta, 1988) in order to experience beliefs (mutual or different) and to act accordingly (confrontation, dialogue, agreement, success or failure). People trust each other about the fact that they can express themselves freely, that their identity and claim for recognition will have room in the organized encounter. They trust the (broad) platform of the movement and give credit to the possibility, however remote, that they might influence others, governments and international agencies because the scenario and the visibility guarantee the diffusion of their messages, values and symbolic elements. This is in fact the substantive matter of co-operation through exchanging information, constructing networks, connecting newcomers, relying on diffused leadership. It is a structuring condition that permits the World Social Forum to repeat itself for consecutive years since January 2001, making efforts to obtain some success through continuous co-operation (the international committee, preparatory meetings, the Charter of Principles). Trust and co-operation give the basis for the production of solidarities that are sustained by the commitment of actors to their values, the common causes and the reciprocity produced within a transnational movement. In this case solidarity is produced on more than one level.

Firstly, taking into account the organizing principle of a global social justice and its associated values, the solidarity produced through the process of promoting continuing events is of a general type; it is extended in time and it is not measurable because it concerns values and perceptions that form collective action on all levels. General solidarity presupposes long term gains related to justice and liberty on a world-wide scale; these can change the understanding of governments, agencies, parliaments and many sectors of civil societies in relation to poverty and inequality and to the rights to difference and recognition (the individual's status in society), both among developed and non-developed countries and within nations. Secondly, when the events take place as an associative force, it is possible to speak of a balanced type of solidarity, where reciprocal exchanges are produced within the boundaries of the action performed in each event. Here, co-operation and commitments are according to the punctual expectations and to the immediate consequences of a major transnational gathering. In this sense, the balanced solidarity is produced within a frame of calculability (results, failures, stand-by situations) and in a specific period of time (the preparation, the event, the post-event).

When studying the structure of convergences concerning a systematic understanding of transnational movements, solidarity is a concept that pervades the core of democratisation of social opportunities and power transcribed by these events. It is an analytical support in order to explain, among other arguments, what makes transnational collective action, at the same time, a very fluid format and a concrete fact.

### **3- The World Social Forum: a transient space-movement or a new social subject?**

Social movements and diverse protest organisations from all over the world have since the 1990's profited immensely in terms of framing their discourses and organizing their strategies for an alternative globalization. They have been able to gather together in order to demonstrate against the hegemonic economic globalization and its *pensée unique* during several meetings sponsored by the multilateral institutions in charge of implementing neo-liberal policies and identified as the main global economic players. Apart from this, they have also created their

own political opportunity structures, particularly through the several events organized within the World Social Forum process.

Nevertheless, the WSF faces some key obstacles in order to remain plural with its member organisations and movements and, at the same time, conserve its cohesion centred on its Charter of Principles. One of the questions that remain unanswered so far is that of the sustainability of its political approach based on plurality of membership within an open space. The difficulty that the WSF lived in January 2005 when a group of intellectuals and political leaders launched the “Manifest of Porto Alegre” as a counter-proposal to the Consensus of Washington is an example of the constraints that this space-movement goes through when trying to avoid deliberation on unified and concrete declarations for an alternative globalization<sup>7</sup>. Can the philosophy of an open space produce political results that are compatible with the logics of international and institutionalized political decision making? Will this multiplicity of actors and opinions keep their membership in the long term, once concrete proposals are set out on the negotiating table devoted to issues of an alternative globalization? Can the Forum be seen as a transient space-movement or as the emergence of a new social subject? We will attempt to bring some light to these questions through two central axes of analysis: the WSF as a community of social practices facing the challenge of a new culture of politics; and the dilemma of identity-building *vis-à-vis* its process of global expansion.

### 3.1- Community of social practices and culture of politics

As a community of social practices and a political process, the World Social Forum can be viewed as an integral part of a broader movement commonly referred to as the alterglobalist movement fighting for global social justice ideals. The term “alterglobalist” has replaced the original “anti-globalist” movement, thus marking in 2002 a major and uneasy switch from the *anti* to the *alter* position. The roots of the movement lie in the 1990s with the emergence of the Zapatista movement in Mexico, which can be considered to be the first key insurrection against neoliberal globalization. The Zapatistas stated their rejection of neoliberalism and decided to focus the movement on the increase of international trade and private investment at the expense of local cultures. Action started in July 1996 when the Zapatistas held a first intercontinental meeting against neoliberalism and called for the setting up of a network of resistance (Le Bot, 2003).

Since the end of the 1990s, the protest movement has used mobilisations in the form of counter-summits and assemblies in Seattle, Prague, Nice and the first counter-summit to the Davos

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<sup>7</sup> *Twelve proposals for another better world* (including external debt relief programmes, the taxation of international financial flows, the end of fiscal heavens, a deep reform of the UM system, and so forth) integrated the Manifest of Porto Alegre. It was signed by nineteen intellectuals and political leaders, such as José Saramago, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Ignacio Ramonet, Emir Sader, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Aminata Traoré (the only woman), Eduardo Galeano, Ricardo Petrella, Tariq Ali, Walden Bello and Immanuel Wallerstein. This Manifest was seen as the result of a clash within the international committee of the Forum: making proposals on behalf of the Forum goes against the Charter of Principles, which says in its sixth point that the WSF is not a deliberative organisation, and that no one can talk on its behalf. This Manifest had not been discussed within the international committee before its launching.

Economic Forum, which then led to the first World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre in January 2001. In 1999, Seattle was characterized by continuous demonstrations from November 30 to December 3 with the participation of some 350 organisations facing up to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and, according to statements by alterglobalists, to the liberal system that it is part of. The Seattle demonstrations clearly expressed protests participating in a broader anti-neoliberal movement; they were not an isolated event but a process that planned to strengthen participation of civil society in decision-making at different political scales (Coburn, 2003).

One question raised after the events in Seattle and the others that followed is that of the organisation of protest as a key social practice in community building. Social movement leaders formed the habit of seeing each other by holding strategic meetings to discuss the mobilisation calendar, and to link the networks of the North and those of the South. The importance of the International Forum on Globalization can be noted in this regard: this Forum has defined itself as an alliance of economists and activists<sup>8</sup> whose main objective is to lead protest against the neoliberal economy. Discussions in alliances such as this Forum have been centred on the four main campaigns: writing off the debts of developing countries; reforming international financial institutions; taxing movements of capital; and new rules for world trade that award importance to sustainable development.

Each of these four enlarging issues is set in a broader network of actions. Although the campaign centred on the regulation of world trade was initially less organized, the militants of the NGO Friends of the Earth, of Via Campesina and consumer associations profited from the non-adoption of the Multilateral Investment Agreement (MIA) by OECD in 1998 to make public their concern with regard to food security, genetically-modified organisms and environmental protection. Furthermore, these organisations started another kind of political combat by condemning the excessive protection awarded to the investments of multinational corporations through the clause on the expropriation of capital<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> The list includes, *inter alia*, Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians, Vandana Shiva of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, Walden Bello of the Focus on the Global South and Martin Khor of the Third World Network.

<sup>9</sup> The MIA established that each part of the Agreement should treat the investors of other member countries and their investments as favourably as its own investors and their investments (national treatment clause) or the investors and investments of third countries in similar circumstances (most-favoured nation clause). Each party to the Agreement would be obliged to guarantee the most favourable regime between the national treatment clause and the most-favoured nation clause. It is important to remark that these clauses are taken up in Articles 11, 1102 and 1103 of NAFTA. In both of these agreements the notion of investment applies to goods and services, transactions and financial holdings (stocks, shares, options, and so forth), to natural resources, to real estate, land and agricultural and intellectual property. Laws requiring fair prior compensation exist in practically all countries in the case of the seizure of the property or holdings of a domestic or foreign company; the dead MIA and the living NAFTA add the notion of measures “tantamount to expropriation” that would give the right to compensation for “loss of future profits”, for example, in the case of a new regulation concerning environmental protection or public health. This expropriation clause might prevent the member states party to the agreement from making any sovereign effort in social or environmental policies as these policies can be considered by business as a barrier to the free expansion of investment.

It is true that these various organisations and social movements within the WSF quickly came up against the main difficulty of taking a position as a coherent joint force for proposals. Nevertheless, they themselves see their plurality as an advantage thanks to the mingling of ideas and experiences in the setting-up of political alliances also with certain representatives of institutions and governments during international trade negotiations<sup>10</sup>. The acceptance of the different viewpoints and the negotiations that follow are part and parcel of their political culture as an open space-movement. Herein lies a profound change in the way culture and politics are perceived within the Forum. As Keraghel and Sen (2005) affirm, when it calls itself “social”, the Forum is fundamentally a political idea and promotes a specific vocabulary, grammar, and culture of politics. The Forum represents an experiment of social practices aiming at a cultural change in the way politics is conceived of and lived. Also focusing on a register that includes cultural values, subjective feelings and energy, the WSF may look like a “jam session” where politics can cope with uncertainty and is not constantly straining for formal harmony (Osterweil, 2004; Wainwright, 2004).

The Forum attempts to fight against cultural uniformity through an inclusive atmosphere with respect for diversity, but also through its organisation as a forum of open-spaces and the non-deliberative nature of its meetings (Pleyers, 2004). In this case, politics goes beyond formal rules and also work through social norms, experiences, ideology and values. Politics and culture are clearly interdependent in the Forum’s organisational and working methods, which reminds us of the definition of a culture of politics that is embedded in the practices, relationships, and processes that define social movements, their spaces and events. As recall Alvarez et al. (1998:7), “culture is political because meanings are constitutive of processes that, implicitly or explicitly, seek to redefine social power. That is, when movements deploy alternative conceptions of woman, nature, race, economy, democracy or citizenship which unsettle dominant cultural meanings, they enact a cultural politics”.

Therefore the multiplicity of speakers and actors, and the diversity of sometimes contrasting objectives have not prevented the emergence and the development of the several editions of the WSF. On the contrary, they have rendered possible a new epistemology of the South (Sousa Santos, 2005), which can be defined as a process and event that through its very plurality and openness attempts to produce ways of knowing that work against the monocultures of the mind and get far away from traditional scientific logics of Western modernity (Shiva, 2003). Because their conception of political culture does not only result from the enunciation of words in a top-down perspective, social movements and organisations within the Forum have had to move beyond in defining their own horizontal methods of work and informal systems of knowledge production and exchange. This does not mean that the Charter of Principles is not a key guiding document for the WSF member organisations; however, the Forum’s culture of politics also draws considerably from its micro practices and organisational processes (Osterweil, 2004). How meetings are run, the way the space is organized, or how expertise and knowledge are

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<sup>10</sup> One example was the alliance formed at the WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun in September 2003 between the governments of Brazil and India (among others) on the one hand, and the alterglobalists on the other, against the maintaining of non-egalitarian rules for trade in agricultural products between countries in the North and the South.

distributed (the “how”) are as central to the WSF as its debates on external debt relief, international migrations or contemporary forms of war (the “why”).

### **3.2- Political pedagogy, identity-building and strategic global expansion**

The Forum has thus become a place where several alterglobalist movements can express their own views on globalization; it is also seen as a political and cultural space where civil society groups exchange on social and economic alternatives to the hegemonic globalization. The WSF has provided a platform suitable for reflection on the possible alternatives to the neoliberal globalization model, and can be considered as a group of open areas for meetings, discussions and proposals or, as suggested by Fisher and Ponniah, “a pedagogical space enabling learning, networking and political organisation” (Fisher and Ponniah, 2003).

The idea of a political pedagogy is at the heart of identity-building for WSF member organisations, and is constantly challenged with the need to integrate new organisations and social movements, and expand this space-movement to new geographies, as shows the recent development of multi-centric forums in Bamako, Caracas and Karachi. Nevertheless, although there is much convergence in struggles and discussions, management diversity in this network of networks (Rojo et al., 2004) or this agglomeration of anti-systemic movements (Wallerstein, 2004) is still a challenge, as is the question of a consensus on projects for a socially just and an environmentally sustainable society. Learning by means of social practices throughout the process, and avoiding a false consensus amidst so different movements and organisations is a political and a cultural critical factor for the evolution of the WSF in its resistance to what they identify as the homogenising forces of globalization.

There is no doubt that a tension can be generated between the “reformist alterglobalists” (for example, the organisations that are part of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and that attended the Millennium Summit in May 2000) and the “radical anti globalization movements” (be they internationalists or nationalists). This tension stems from a two-fold strategy whose political result is not yet clearly defined within the WSF. Some will choose to negotiate with international agencies and attempt to change the world order through existing institutional breaches, while others will systematically oppose all agencies (from UNDP and ILO to World Bank and IMF) since they would represent the neoliberal principles that underpin the global economic system.

The notion of identity-building serves the purpose of reaffirming something that WSF members have in common; it provides an answer to the question: as a WSF member, who am I socially? However, it also hides what makes these members so different. The political pedagogy is in this context a key feature since it contributes on a regular basis to constructing the social representations of those who are in and out this space-movement. Alterglobalists are also concerned with social representations of globalization: they know that the unequal structure of political participation in the world affairs is a reflection of the inequalities in social forces, and



are therefore slowly trying to change this unequal structure in their favour by working on symbols and cultural values.

This political identity, as an affirmation of the *self* of the WSF, is not necessarily recognized by other global players (for instance, “the WSF fights for a world that is socially more just”); nonetheless, some elements of this identity may be given to WSF members by other global players who invest them with patterns of an expected international behaviour (for example, “the WSF as a group of protesters who never make any concrete proposals”). It is widely known from political theory that the affirmation of an identity, because it is a category of the social defined both by rules of belonging and particular features of a group or individual, is essential for the development of interest and passion (reason and subjectivity), the two main motors for any possibility of integration in political relationships (Wendt, 1994). In other words, identity also plays the role of naming who is who in the “political game”. In order to build a common denominator around any issue, WSF members must confront themselves with what they share in common (or not).

The process of critical reflection on its own identity has also intensified within the Forum. At the second European Social Forum held in Paris, Saint Denis and Bobigny just before the WSF in Mumbai (India) in November 2003, the agenda favoured the refocusing of discussions on the strategies and identity of the alterglobalist movement. Changing from the *anti* to the *alter* position implied a need to seek alternatives in order to achieve a more human globalization or another form of globalization. The second European Social Forum revealed the need for further analysis and discussion on the nature and identity of the movement itself as a *sine qua non* condition for the Forum as a space-movement to produce a better definition of political strategies and in the search for possible alliances and pathways for changing the world society.

It is true that the alterglobalist movement has gained political maturity and that the question of its identity is increasingly raised. Alterglobalists portray themselves as an emancipation movement aiming to uncovering the lies of neoliberalism and provide information and options on the political issues of globalization. It is a movement in which cultural and social diversity is considered by militants to be a vital force in the way in which democracy is conceived and practised. Even if the political orientations of the participants (both individuals and associations) diverge, their union is based on the shared conviction that rights and social justice should outweigh profit and trade opportunities. Identity building through a political pedagogy can therefore be found in the very heart of the alterglobalist movement. Deep-seated features of the WSF identity include, *inter alia*, avoiding unified statements, recognition of difference as a common denominator<sup>11</sup>, defining itself as a space-movement in which distinct cultures meet

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<sup>11</sup> The political consensus defined as both the recognition by all of the existence of different visions of the world but also as agreement on a common denominator of strategic action, is based on the Charter of Principles of the Forum in an approach that refuses both neoliberalism and imperialism and the politics of violence. The significant changes that took place in 2004 in India (the extension to other subjects of struggle, opposition to the caste system and to religious fundamentalism and the massive, broader participation of women) strengthened the objectives drawn up at the 2003 WSF. These were aimed at

politically, avoiding the emergence of a spokesman for the movement, using confusion as a tactic, refusing urgency and working on a long-term basis (Biagiotti, 2004). These features contrast clearly with those of the institutional stakeholders normally present in the field of international development co-operation.

At last, it is important to notice that the WSF and its social movements do not have a national territorial base in the definition of their strategies; in most cases they operate independently of a national sovereignty. Their field of action is a transnational area of projects, practices, symbols and utopias. Therefore, we can say that alterglobalists as a new social subject try in their own way to participate in the management of world affairs. Even if they also use a modern set of collective actions that are typical of the nineteenth century (street demonstrations, marches and petitions), transnational social movements have promoted at least three new strategies in order to guarantee their global visibility. First, their actions must always be a happening in the tradition of the 1968 movements, and the protest calendar must evolve as the neoliberal plans spread; second, they make their actions a media event, and include acts of civil disobedience; third, they use second expert evaluations through reports, meeting and alternative media (Dufour, 2005). Indeed, the media visibility of alterglobalist meetings has given these movements an opportunity to make them known at the world scale, especially in the early days of their protests in 1999. As Susan George said at one of these meetings, referring to their direct opposition to the Davos Forum, WTO, the World Bank and the IMF: "Wherever 'They' are, some of 'Us' will be also" (Fougier, 2002). Seeking for media coverage and visibility is also a key element in the process of identity building for the alterglobalist movement.

#### **4- Epilogue: open questions for discussion**

The World Social Forum is a relevant open space-movement precisely because it contrasts with the formalist self referred political system of representative democracy and traditional international relations. The social and political orders (national and international) of modern societies have been observed as balanced structures, that have supposedly contemplated a predictable and universal material progress and a class society based on interests and a general sense of citizenship. The new social movements and later the transnational movements question the democracy deficit and the ineffectiveness of international regulation of world politics which have resulted from this received model of society. Globalization forces the emergence of the strong paradoxes of both contemporary democracy and the asymmetric international relations. It uncovers the enormous cleavage between an idealized progress promised by liberal and keynesian democracy (not to speak of socialist experiences) and the limited institutional capacity to guarantee liberty and to provide equality world wide and within the principle of justice. Consequently, the transnational social movements have played an important role by exposing the disconnections between liberty, distribution and recognition.

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considering the best ways of promoting social justice, solidarity and democracy as global values, at serious reflection on the practice of alternatives to neoliberal globalisation and to considering putting into practice the issues discussed at the Forum.

The arguments stated above, as we see them, are a starting point to organize and deepen the discussion about the new sense of politics and of the new individual and collective subjects that emerge from the repeated experiences of the World Social Forum. They permit to sketch three levels of questioning concerning the following aspects:

- (a) In respect to results and expectations, can the transnational social movements deliver concrete outputs and overcome the unpredictable development of their mobilisations, considering the strong capacity of the capitalist economy to overcome crises?
- (b) In respect to their internal dynamics, can the transnational social movements guarantee their self-sustainability by being able of continuously converting convictions and beliefs into political energy, as well as visibility and exposure into political appeal?
- (c) As to their relationship with institutional politics, can the transnational social movements through the World Social Forum as an open space for contestation build bridges and dialogues with the formal national and international political actors?

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