

DEMOCRATIZING DEMOCRACY

Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon

Reinventing Social Emancipation:
Toward New Manifestos

VOLUME 1



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collaborator and dear friend of more than ten years. She is the recipient of my most deeply felt gratitude.

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Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Note

- 1 Besides this English edition, this series is also being published in Brazil (Civilização Brasileira), Mexico (Fondo de Cultura Económica), Italy (Cittá Aperta Edizioni), and Portugal (Afrontamento).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION Reinventing Social Emancipation: Toward New Manifestos

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Although neoliberal globalization—the current version of global capitalism—is by far the dominant form of globalization, it is not the only one. Parallel to it and, to a great extent, as a reaction to it, another globalization is emerging. It consists of transnational networks and alliances among social movements, social struggles, and non-governmental organizations. From the four corners of the globe, all these initiatives have mobilized to fight against the social exclusion, destruction of the environment and biodiversity, unemployment, human rights violations, pandemics, and inter-ethnic hatreds, directly or indirectly caused by neoliberal globalization.

Thus, there is an alternative, counter-hegemonic globalization, organized from the bottom up. Among its most salient manifestations one could mention the protests in Seattle, in November 1999, against the meeting of the WTO; several protests in the following years against the meetings of the Multilateral Financial Institutions, the G-8, the European Union summits and the World Economic Forum in Davos (January 2000), Washington (April 2000), Melbourne (September 2000), Prague (September 2000), Nice (December 2000), Quebec (April 2001), Gothenburg (June 2001) and Genoa (July 2001); and the three editions of the World Social Forum, in Porto Alegre, in 2001, 2002 and 2003. Alternative globalization is, however, a wider phenomenon with deeper implications. It involves a great many initiatives, struggles, and local organizations occurring in many different parts of the world, but often ignored by the corporate media. They are more or less tightly connected through local-global alliances of different kinds.

The movement for an alternative globalization is a new political fact focused on the idea that the current phase of global capitalism requires new forms of resistance and new directions for social emancipation. From within this movement, made up of a large number of social movements and NGOs, new social agents and practices are emerging. They operate in an equally

new framework, networking local, national, and global struggles. The problem with these new social movements is that in order to do them justice a new social theory and new analytical concepts are called for. Since neither the one nor the others emerge easily from the inertia of the disciplines, the risk that they may be undertheorized and undervalued is considerable. This risk is all the more serious as the counter-hegemonic globalization, given its scope and internal diversity, not only challenges the various disciplines of the conventional social sciences, but challenges as well scientific knowledge as the sole producer of social and political rationality. To put it another way, the alternative globalization raises not only analytical and theoretical questions, but also epistemological questions. This much is expressed in the idea, widely shared by activists, that there will be no global social justice without global cognitive justice. But the challenge posed by the alternative globalization has one more dimension still. Beyond the theoretical, analytical and epistemological questions, it raises a new political issue: it aims to fulfill utopia ("another world is possible") in a world apparently devoid of utopias (TINA: "there is no alternative"). The theme of this collection of books is alternative globalization.

PREMISES AND CHALLENGES

There are two fundamental premises underlying this project, one epistemological and one socio-political. The epistemological premise is that science in general, and the social sciences in particular, are currently undergoing a profound crisis of epistemological confidence. The promises that have given legitimacy to the privileged epistemological position of scientific knowledge since the nineteenth century—promises of peace, rationality, freedom, equality, progress, and the sharing of progress—have not only failed to materialize even at the center of the world system, but have also been transformed in the countries on the periphery and semiperiphery into an ideology that legitimizes subordination to Western imperialism. In the name of modern science, many alternative knowledges and sciences have been destroyed, and the social groups that used these systems to support their own autonomous paths of development have been humiliated. In short, in the name of science, epistemicide has been committed, and the imperial powers have resorted to it to disarm any resistance of the conquered peoples and social groups.

This imperial epistemology began to be consolidated in the middle of the nineteenth century and dominated the whole of the twentieth century. What is new today? In the first place, it is now clearer than ever that the universalism of modern science is a Western particularism, which has the power to define all rival forms of knowledge as particular, local, contextual and situational. Thus, there have been and there still are other, non-Western sciences

and forms of modernity, as well as many other forms of knowledge, that are validated by criteria other than those of modern Western science. The epistemological diversity of the world is thus potentially infinite. All forms of knowledge are contextual, and the more they claim not to be so, the more they are. There is no pure or complete knowledge, only constellations of knowledges. Within these constellations, there are hybridizations, which, however, rather than contributing to the elimination of unequal power relations, frequently lead to their entrenchment. Unequal relations can be defined as the capacity of one form of knowledge to convert another into a resource or raw material. The constellations of knowledges in the field of biodiversity are only the most dramatic manifestation of an epistemological inequality that permeates all the thematic areas covered by this research project.

The recognition of other rival knowledges, even if distorted, is one manifestation of the crisis of epistemological confidence. But there are others. For instance, ecological disasters have shown that modern science has expanded the capacity of human action much more efficiently than the capacity to predict the consequences of that action. For this reason, the consequences of scientific action tend to be less scientific than the actions that caused them. As the nexus of causality becomes volatile, the world is paradoxically becoming overwhelmed with the undesired consequences of desired actions.

What is now new, therefore, is the recognition that there are rival knowledges providing an alternative to modern science, and that, even within this science, there are alternatives to the dominant paradigms. With this, the prospect of a multicultural science, or rather, multicultural sciences, is today more likely than ever. However, this possibility is not distributed equally among different scientific communities. Its credibility decreases in inverse proportion to the hegemonic dominance of the scientific paradigm, with its strict and narrow divisions amongst disciplines, its positivist methodologies that do not distinguish objectivity from neutrality, its bureaucratic and discriminatory organization of knowledge into departments, laboratories and faculties that reduce the adventure of knowledge to a matter of corporatist privilege. This is why it is precisely in the center of the world system, in the core countries and hegemonic centers of scientific production, that the capacity for true scientific innovation is today severely limited. New ideas, especially those that seek to bind science once again to its original promises, rarely get past the gatekeepers and the demands of the market.

This means that, although the loss of epistemological confidence is opening up spaces for innovation, the critique of epistemology will be for a long time much more advanced than the epistemology of criticism. In other words, it seems to me that, however lucid and radical our critique of the dominant scientific epistemology may be, our concrete work as social scientists will remain chained to the dominant paradigm, in terms of conceptual

and analytical methodologies as well as in terms of organizational and infrastructural conditions, to a much greater extent than we would be willing to admit. This will be particularly the case of scientific practices certified by the hegemonic centers of scientific production. For this reason, in order to maximize innovation, it is necessary to start from non-hegemonic scientific communities.

This is the context that gave rise to the first challenge of this project. It was conceived and executed outside the hegemonic centers of scientific production by scientific communities from the semiperiphery and periphery of the world system. Of course, this fact is not enough in itself to guarantee the project's aim of scientific renovation. After all, social scientists are by and large heirs to the hegemonic scientific paradigm (although some more reluctantly than others). If this is the case, how can scientists working outside the hegemonic centers convert their ex-centricity and relative marginality into energy for innovation? And should this innovation be limited to the construction of new counter-hegemonic epistemologies or does it also have the potential to become a new hegemony itself? And, if so, will the new hegemony be better than the present one? From what point of view? And for whom?

Before discussing how it is possible to respond to this challenge, I will linger a little on the second premise of this project, which, as I have said, is of a socio-political nature. The successes of modern science are increasingly being measured by its capacity to subject ever more social relations in ever more parts of the world to the logic of global capitalism. This is the result of a long historical process that, since the fifteenth century, has had many facets and assumed many names: discoveries, colonialism, evangelization, slavery, imperialism, development and underdevelopment, modernization and, finally, globalization. This project starts from the idea that neoliberal globalization is not radically new: it is simply an exponential expansion of transnational relations, leading to a transformation of the scales of the units of analysis and of the measures of social change that until now have prevailed in the economy, society, politics and culture. As has always been the case throughout the history of modern capitalism and in all previous forms of globalization centered upon Asia, the Indian Ocean or the so-called Middle East, what we mean by globalization refers in fact to clusters of unequal social relations, and thus it would be more correct to speak of globalizations rather than globalization.

Since its beginnings, modern capitalism has been a project with a global vocation, and has always evolved through an intensification of global relations. Furthermore, there has always been resistance to this dynamic and predatory project, from the slave revolts to the struggles for national liberation, from workers' struggles to socialist projects, from new social movements to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. So, what is new about the situation in which we find ourselves today is, first, the unprecedented

intensification of transnational relations that, together with the new communication and information technologies, have produced profound changes on the spatial and temporal scales of social action. The protracted historical duration of secular trends seems anachronistic in the face of the instantaneous time of financial markets. But, on the other hand, the past, supposedly left behind, has made a comeback in the form of religious fundamentalism, unilateral pre-emptive aggressions and ethnic cleansing. Moreover, the cycles of political action have become short-circuited by the erosion of the national unit of decision-making.

Turbulence on the temporal scales has its counterpart in turbulence on the spatial scales. The local is increasingly the other side of the global, and vice versa; also, the national space is being transformed into an instrument of mediation between the local and the global. Most importantly, this explosion of scales has brought about both interdependence and disjunction. The feeling of disconnection and exclusion in relation to the transformations occurring in space and time has never been so profound. In other words, never have so many social groups been so connected with the rest of the world by virtue of the intensification of their isolation; never have so many been integrated by virtue of the way in which their exclusion is deepened.

A second new factor is the voracious way in which hegemonic globalization has come to devour not only its promises of progress, liberty, equality, non-discrimination and rationality, but also the very idea of struggle for these objectives. Hegemonic social regulation is no longer undertaken in the name of some future project. As such, it has delegitimized all alternative future projects previously designated as projects of social emancipation. The automatic disorder of the financial markets is a metaphor for a form of social regulation that does not require the idea of social emancipation to sustain and legitimize itself. But, paradoxically, it is from within this void of regulation and emancipation that initiatives, movements, and organizations have arisen all over the world, struggling simultaneously against forms of regulation that do not regulate and against forms of emancipation that do not emancipate.

This leads to the second set of challenges that this project faced. Is it possible to bring together what has been set asunder by hegemonic globalization and set asunder what has been brought together by it? Is this all that counter-hegemonic globalization entails? Is it possible to contest the forms of dominant social regulation and from there reinvent social emancipation? Is not this reinvention just another trap that Western modernity has set for us at the moment when we thought it was entering its final stage? What contribution do researchers make to meet these challenges?

I am convinced that it was fatal for modern science and for the social sciences in particular to have abandoned their aim of struggling toward a fairer society. Barriers were set up between science and progressive politics,

knowledge and transformative action, rationality and the will to solidarity, truth and virtue, which permitted scientists to become, in good conscience, mercenaries of the ruling powers. Is it possible to reconnect that which has been so firmly separated? Is it possible to construct forms of knowledge that are more committed to the human condition? Is it possible to do this in a non-Northcentric and non-disciplinary way?

From such premises and such enormous challenges, only ambitious objectives could result. This project has two major objectives: first, to contribute to the renovation of the social sciences and, second, to contribute to the reinvention of social emancipation. These two objectives are in fact one: the renovation of science that we seek has no other aim than the reinvention of social emancipation.

RENOVATING THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Considering the objectives above, the social sciences in which many of us have been trained are more a part of the problem than of the solution. Nevertheless, as I have already indicated, there are today some conditions that allow us to think of the possibility of renovating the social sciences. Such conditions, in fact, made possible this project and rendered it consistent.

The first condition is a general one. We are in a phase of paradigmatic transition. There is a crisis of epistemological confidence and the confrontation between rival knowledges is increasing. Dissidence within the scientific field is strong: forms of science-action, citizen science, popular science have been proposed; the multicultural character of science is being investigated; new connections between science and rival forms of knowledge have been suggested. In other words, there is an environment conducive to innovation, which means that innovation will not be prematurely voted a failure.

The second condition is more specific. This project brings together social science researchers in the South that have begun to question (frequently all by themselves) the limits of their analytical tools and the possible uselessness of their work. Often they have agonized over selling their knowledge to hegemonic interests, or committing themselves (for survival) to positions that betray their ideals of autonomy and political solidarity with the social struggles of the oppressed. This is the case when they are proletarianized as native informants at the service of the global consultancy industry.

The social scientists involved in this project mostly are from and work in semiperipheral countries. This was not a random choice. I am convinced that the so-called new interdependencies created by information and communication capital, rather than eliminating the hierarchies in the world, have actually deepened them. The names we use to define this hierarchy are important (developed and developing countries; First World and Third World; North and South; rich countries and poor countries) but they are

less important than the recognition that this hierarchy exists and that it is becoming more marked. The hierarchy today is not only between countries; it is between economic sectors, social groups, regions, knowledges, forms of social organization, cultures, and identities. This hierarchy is the accumulated effect of unequal relations between the dominant and dominated forms in each of these social fields.

This hierarchy is today expressed in two ways: in the global-local dichotomy, in which the local is the subordinated counterpart of a reality or entity that has the capacity to designate itself as global; and in the trichotomy of core, semiperiphery and periphery that is applied especially, though not exclusively, to countries. The project was mainly focused on semiperipheral countries, or, in other words, countries of intermediate development that are also intermediaries in the regional-global linkages within the world system: two in Latin America (Brazil and Colombia); one in Asia (India); and one in Africa (South Africa). The working hypothesis behind this choice was, on the one hand, that it is in these countries that the forces of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic globalization collide most intensely; and, on the other, that, although these countries are outside the hegemonic centers of scientific production, over the years they have constructed strong and frequently numerous scientific communities.

These scientific communities, more than any others, have operated under a double disjunction. First, the theories and analytical frameworks developed within core or hegemonic science have shown themselves to be inadequate for the analysis of the realities of their countries. Second, hegemonic science has shown either a passive inability or an active hostility to recognizing scientific work autonomously produced in these countries, if and when it flouts the methodological and theoretical canons and terms of reference developed by the hegemonic centers of scientific production and exported (or imposed) by them at the global level.

The words of the Cuban literary critic Roberto Fernández Retamar in *Caliban and Other Essays* about the colonial reader apply to the social scientists of the semiperiphery better than to anyone else: "There is no one that knows the literature of the core countries better than the colonial reader." Indeed, the social scientists of the semiperiphery tend to know hegemonic science very well, even better than the scientists of core countries, because they know its limitations and frequently seek ways of overcoming them. This situation becomes more complex when it is compared to the situations of social scientists of the core countries or to that of those in the peripheral countries. The former, in their overwhelming majority, do not know (and if they do know, do not value) the scientific knowledge produced in the semiperiphery or the periphery. It is considered inferior in everything that is different or alternative. Therefore, it is easily cannibalized and converted into a resource or raw material by core science. In organizational terms, the result

is the proletarianization of peripheral and semiperipheral scientists. The social scientists from peripheral countries, in their turn, in addition to working under more precarious conditions and being subject to all kinds of persecutions, feel isolated, unaware of the work that is done in the semiperiphery; and when they manage to overcome their isolation, seek to compensate for it with an uncritical allegiance to core science. Mozambique was included in this project in order to illustrate the possibility of alternative relations between the periphery and semiperiphery.

The epistemological objective of this project was, therefore, to bring together a significant number (or critical mass) of researchers mostly from the semiperiphery and to have them work together in different countries and continents without the control of core science, in order to reclaim the possibility of another kind of science, one that is less imperial and more multicultural and that accepts a more egalitarian relationship among scientists and among alternative forms of knowledge. Above all, this project aims to assert the possibility of putting this constellation of knowledges at the service of the struggle against different forms of oppression and discrimination—in short, of putting it at the service of social emancipation.

In this sense, the project is self-reflective about its innovative character. Like all projects of this type, however, it may run the risks of failure for unfeasibility or facile success for hegemonic co-optation. Aware of these risks, we have taken some precautions, which, from the perspective of hegemonic science, will be seen as reckless violations of the methodological canon.

First, this project did not have a structured theoretical framework. Its concerns are anchored in my previous work, mainly in my book *Toward a New Common Sense: Law, Science and Politics in the Paradigmatic Transition*.¹ I argue there that we are entering a period of paradigmatic transition in law, science, and politics, and that in such a context it is imperative to open up the theoretical, analytical and methodological canons as a condition for renovation and transformation. Thus, instead of a theoretical framework, the project had a set of broad analytical orientations that constituted a horizon within which various theoretical frameworks could fall. These orientations were expected to provide only a very loose guidance, having in mind that this project brought together not only different scientific communities but also different cultures. Just as an example, social emancipation is bound to mean very different things in different social, political and cultural contexts. Second, this project did not impose a single method or a single set of research methods; it was open to different methodologies chosen by the researchers themselves. Third, it did not make use of a series of working hypotheses, and even less of terms of reference. Very deliberately, the project assumed that the concerns and analytical horizons presented above were what was strictly necessary to motivate social scientists to join forces in the pursuit of objectives that are sufficiently important to be actively shared. The theory

of this project was thus to be collectively constructed, from the bottom up, and the basic concepts to be worked out together. These violations of the methodological canon were not committed lightly. The risk of chaos and cacophony was there. I think, nonetheless, that, in the current conditions, running that risk was and is the only alternative to the proletarianization or “mercenaryization” of science.

Still, against the grain of epistemological orthodoxy, this project explicitly assumed the plurality of rival and alternative knowledges, and sought to give voice to them, particularly through the sub-project *Voices of the World*. The idea was to bring scientific knowledge face-to-face with non-scientific, explicitly local knowledges, knowledges grounded in the experience of the leaders and activists of the social movements studied by the social scientists. The protagonists of *Voices of the World* are activists and leaders of popular movements and organizations who have learned in the struggle of resistance against hegemonic powers the practical knowledge that in the end moves the world and, more than anything else, gives meaning to the world.

Finally, and also in deliberate disrespect of the canon, this project privileged the definition of a vast analytical field, minimally burdened with theoretical or empirical concepts, and defined on general lines. It involved the identification of social fields in which the conflict between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic globalization is expected to be or to become more intense, and which are also fields of conflict between rival knowledges. It also involved, in each social field, giving an analytical priority to the struggles that resist hegemonic globalization and propose alternatives to it.

In giving priority to counter-hegemonic globalization, the objective was to contribute to the reinvention of social emancipation. In other words, science in this project involved the exercise of citizenship and solidarity, and its quality was gauged ultimately by the quality of citizenship and solidarity that it accounted for and promoted. Here lies the second objective of this project: the reinvention of social emancipation.

REINVENTING SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

There are three main difficulties raised by this objective, which correspond to as many challenges. The first concerns the notion of counter-hegemonic globalization itself. How can a cluster of initiatives or movements be considered a form of globalization? Many initiatives and movements that are analyzed here are local and occur in very circumscribed time-spaces. In many of these cases, it is clearly possible to identify connections and alliances with other foreign or transnational initiatives or organizations, and thus it would seem legitimate to speak of globalization. But, supposing that different initiatives with features in common, such as occur in the area of participatory democracy, arise in the same period in different parts of the world, but

without any mutual contact or knowledge, should we speak of globalization in such a case?

The dominant conception of counter-hegemonic globalization tends to be restricted to the activities and protests of transnational NGOs and social movements. Undoubtedly, this transnational democratic movement of activism without borders is a form of counter-hegemonic globalization. But we should not forget that this movement developed out of local initiatives designed to mobilize local struggles to resist translocal, national or global powers. Focusing too much upon dramatic actions of a global nature (actions that usually occur in cities of core countries and that thus attract the attention of the global media) might make us forget that resistance to oppression is a daily task, undertaken by anonymous people away from the gaze of the media; indeed, without this resistance, the transnational democratic movement could not and would not be sustained. In my view, we are entering an era in which the dialectics of the local and the global replaces the dichotomy between the local and the global. Accordingly, in our time, social emancipation involves a dual movement of de-globalization of the local (*vis-à-vis* hegemonic globalization) and its re-globalization (as part of counter-hegemonic globalization).

If it is difficult to define the contours of what is considered local or global, then it is even more difficult to define what is considered hegemonic or counter-hegemonic. It is all too easy to define as counter-hegemonic all initiatives that resist the logic of global capitalism and create alternatives to it. We know that oppression and domination have many faces and that not all of them are the direct or exclusive result of global capitalism (think of sexual discrimination, ethnic discrimination or xenophobia, or even epistemological arrogance). It is, indeed, possible that some initiatives that present themselves as alternatives to global capitalism are themselves a form of oppression. In addition, an initiative that is perceived as counter-hegemonic in a particular country or community at a particular moment may be seen in another country or at another moment as hegemonic. Finally, counter-hegemonic initiatives and movements may be co-opted by hegemonic globalization, without this being noticed by activists, or without them perceiving it as a failure; indeed, it may even be seen as a victory.

The second great difficulty (and challenge, therefore) is the connection that we wish to make between counter-hegemonic globalization and social emancipation. What, after all, is social emancipation? Is it possible or legitimate to define it in the abstract? If it is true that there is not one but various globalizations, is it not equally true that there is not one but many forms of social emancipation? Just like science, is not social emancipation multicultural, definable and valid only in certain contexts, places and circumstances (since what is social emancipation for one social group or at a particular historical moment may be considered regulation or even social oppression for

another social group or at a different moment in time)? Are all struggles against oppression, whatever their means and objectives, struggles for social emancipation? Are there degrees of social emancipation? Is it possible to have social emancipation without individual emancipation? For whom, for what, against whom, against what is social emancipation? Who are the agents of social emancipation? Is there any one privileged agent? Can hegemonic social and institutional forces such as the State ever be partners or active collaborators in actions of social emancipation? If they can, for what types of actions and under what conditions?

If we speak of the reinvention of social emancipation, does this mean that there have been other forms of emancipation before the one for which we are now fighting? How should those previous forms be defined? Why did they cease to be credible? How should their failure be defined? Are we struggling for new contents of social emancipation or for the old contents, presented through new discourses or pursued through new processes? More radically, in speaking of social emancipation, are we not speaking the hegemonic language that made unpronounceable the aspirations of so many peoples and social groups subjugated by North-centric science and political economy? Are we running the risk of promoting social oppression while using the language of social emancipation? As an alternative, could we reach our scientific and political goals without using the concept of social emancipation at all? Many of these issues were discussed in seminars conducted within the ambit of the project in the different countries in question. Many of them are approached again in chapters of the first three volumes of this series. In the fifth and last volume, I shall offer some of my answers.

The third difficulty and the third challenge to my mind are the most dilemmatic but also the most interesting of all. They concern the choice of themes proposed with the intention both of trying out new ways of producing knowledge and of examining their possibilities for social emancipation. The five themes proposed were: participatory democracy; alternative production systems; new labor internationalism; emancipatory multiculturalism, cultural justice and citizenship; and biodiversity and recognition of rival knowledges. Why were these themes chosen and not others? Why were they analyzed in the chosen countries and not in others? If it is true that globalization produces localization, and that it produces homogenization as much as differentiation, is it possible that these themes have the same relevance in different countries? Indeed, is it possible that they have the same meaning at all? If it is possible to detect any coherence between them, could this coherence be established without recourse to a general theory? Is there an alternative to the general theory, for example, a work of intercultural translation capable of creating intelligibility among the different themes, struggles, movements, and practices, without canceling out their autonomy and diversity?

The themes were proposed by me as those in which, in my opinion, epistemological, socio-economic, cultural and political conflicts between North and South, center and periphery, are today most intense and will continue to be so in the next decades. This is the result of an empirical observation that has not yet been adequately theorized. This observation did not in any way impose the specific choice of countries that was made. The focus on semiperipheral countries was theoretically informed as explained above. In addition to this, I wanted to include a semiperipheral country from each of the following three geo-regional blocks: the Americas, Asia and Africa, the latter being an extreme example of integration by exclusion. This choice resulted from previous studies of mine in which I sought to show that the semiperipheral countries assume the roles of intermediaries and have very distinct socio-political characteristics according to the regional bloc in which they are found. These differences are essentially the result of the accumulated effects of previous globalizations in each country and the twists and turns of the specific historical trajectory by means of which these countries have come into contact (usually by force) with Western modernity. According to this criterion, it would have been possible to select various other countries. My choices were made for basically pragmatic reasons. Some were countries in which I had already done research (Brazil and Colombia), and others were not at all familiar to me but, for some reason, attracted me powerfully (as was the case of India and South Africa). Mozambique, a peripheral country where I had also done research, was included in the project to illustrate, as I mentioned above, the counter-hegemonic potential of initiatives and movements in peripheral countries and to signal the strategic importance of local-global linkages between semiperipheral and peripheral countries, that is, the importance of South-South cooperation.

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, I shall state here succinctly the set of analytical orientations presented by me to the project researchers, as well as a brief description of the five themes that originated the case studies.

Analytical orientations

1. Although neoliberal globalization is by far the dominant form of globalization, it is not the only one. Parallel to it and, to a great extent, as a reaction to it, another globalization is emerging that consists of transnational networks and alliances among social movements, social struggles, and non-governmental organizations, which have been mobilizing themselves in the past two decades to fight against social exclusion, the destruction of the envi-

ronment and biodiversity, unemployment, human rights violations, pandemics, and inter-ethnic hatreds directly or indirectly caused by neoliberal globalization. Thus, there is an alternative, counter-hegemonic globalization, emerging from the bottom up. The central theme of this research project is alternative globalization. Hence its title: *Reinventing Social Emancipation*.

2. In the coming decades, the conflicts between these two kinds of globalization are going to set the political agenda at the international, national and even local levels. These conflicts will tend to be most acute in the semiperipheral countries, those countries of intermediate development, between the core and the periphery of the world system. Particularly in semiperipheral countries with large populations, the exclusionary effect of the prescriptions of neoliberal globalization may have a worldwide impact.

3. The conflicts between globalizations, in short, between North and South, are going to be focused on certain issues. Some have evolved from older conflicts that go back to the colonial period, while others are relatively recent. In all of these issues the conflicts reflect unequal power relations. These conflicting issues are addressed in this project through the emancipatory alternatives that have been put forward by subaltern social groups. The thematic areas of the project are as follows: participatory democracy; alternative production systems; new labor internationalism; emancipatory multiculturalism, cultural justice and citizenship; protection of biodiversity and the recognition of rival knowledges (more on this below).

4. Being produced in the core countries and in the hegemonic centers of scientific production, the social sciences tend to be North-centered and as such are very inadequate to the task of giving a reliable account of social transformations occurring in the South. In contrast, the social-scientific production of countries of intermediate development is at present extremely valuable, although it is little known and rarely acknowledged by the hegemonic centers of scientific production. This science produced in the South is not only valuable in itself. Once duly noted and credited, it can bring considerable contributions to the scientific community in general. Resorting to it may amount to creating a new critical mass generating new research topics and new analytical perspectives, thereby enriching the social sciences as a whole the world over.

5. Aside from being North-centric and part and parcel of an imperial epistemology, the social sciences have also been too concerned with quasi-sterile theoretical discussions, such as the relation between structure and agency or between macro- and microanalysis. In my view, the central focus should rather be on the distinction between conformist action and rebellious action.

This distinction is sustained in practice by behavior and attitudes *vis-à-vis* the forms and dynamics of power circulating in society. These forms of power—be they patriarchy, exploitation, commodity fetishism, unequal differentiation of identity, domination, and unequal exchange²—are confirmed and reinforced by conformist actions and contested and undermined by rebellious actions. The struggles and initiatives in each of the five social fields confront one or another of these forms of power in different ways. The focus on rebellious action in this project entails a radical proposition: namely, that there is social emancipation only if there is resistance to all forms of power. A strategy that is overly centered upon the struggles against one single form of power, neglecting all the others, however noble the intentions of activists, may contribute to increasing instead of relieving the global burden of oppression that subaltern social groups have to bear in their daily lives.

6. Throughout the world, social practices are ruled by ordinary, traditional, commonsensical knowledges outside the ambit of what is accepted as scientific knowledge. In most countries of the South, scientific knowledge has had very little impact on the lives of ordinary people and, even when it does, it fails to account for the needs and aspirations of local populations. These are often better served by local knowledges. Without discarding the value of scientific knowledge, it is imperative to bring it face to face with lay and local knowledges, knowledges grounded in the experience of the leaders and activists of the social movements, knowledges and wisdoms of individuals and groups that continue to embody the alternative globalization.

Main themes

1. *Participatory democracy.* Along with the hegemonic model of democracy (liberal, representative democracy), other, subaltern models of democracy have always coexisted, however marginalized or discredited. We live in paradoxical times: at the very moment of its most convincing triumphs across the globe, liberal democracy becomes less and less credible and convincing not only in the “new frontier” countries but also in the countries where it has its deepest roots. The twin crises of representation and participation are the most visible symptoms of such a deficit of credibility, as well as, in the last instance, of legitimacy. Furthermore, local, regional and national communities in different parts of the world are undertaking democratic experiments and initiatives, based on alternative models of democracy, in which the tension between capitalism and democracy is reborn as a positive energy behind new, more inclusive and more just social contracts, no matter how locally bounded they may be. In some countries, traditional forms of authority and government are being re-evaluated in terms of their potential for transformation from within, and for being articulated with other forms

of democratic rule. The tension between counter-hegemonic forms of high-intensity democracy and hegemonic forms of low-intensity democracy lies at the core of alternative globalization.

2. *Alternative production systems.* Debates about counter-hegemonic globalization tend to focus mainly on social, political, or cultural initiatives. Only rarely do they focus on economic initiatives. By economic initiatives is meant local/global initiatives that consist in non-capitalist production and distribution of goods and services, both in rural and urban contexts: cooperatives, mutualities, credit systems, cultivation of lands occupied by landless peasants, systems of water distribution, fishing communities, ecological exploration of the forests, etc. These are the initiatives in which the linkages between the local and the global are harder to establish, if for nothing else because they face more frontally the logic of global capitalism behind hegemonic globalization, not only at the level of production but also at the level of distribution. Another important facet of alternative modes of production is that they are never exclusively economic in nature. They mobilize social and cultural resources that render the inter-thematic linkages a necessary condition of their success. A market economy is indeed possible and even, within limits, desirable. On the contrary, a market society, as heralded by hegemonic globalization, is morally repugnant and most probably ungovernable. It entails a situation that I have designated as social fascism (Santos, 2002: 447).

3. *New labor internationalism.* Labor internationalism was one of most patently unfulfilled previsions of the Communist Manifesto. Capital globalized itself, not the labor movement. On the contrary, the labor movement organized itself at the national level and, at least in the core countries, became increasingly dependent on the welfare state. To be sure, in the twentieth century the international organizations and liaisons kept the idea of international labor struggles alive, yet they became hostage to the Cold War, and their fate was that of the Cold War. After the end of the Cold War, and in response to the most aggressive thrusts of hegemonic globalization, new forms of international labor struggle have emerged, but they are still extremely precarious: a new and socially more inclusive debate on labor standards; international cooperation among unions concerning codes of conduct and the living wage; agreements on institutional cooperation among unions of different countries within the same regional economic block (NAFTA, European Union, Mercosul); articulation among the struggles, claims and demands of the various unions that represent the workers of the same multinational corporation in different countries; new forms of a more plural and inclusive labor activism that is more focused on issues of citizenship and encompassing the most severely marginalized sectors, such as the unemployed, immigrants, women and those working for the growing informal sector. In a more frontal

way than the alternative systems of production, the new forms of labor struggle face the logic of global capitalism in the latter's privileged turf, the economy, but their success depends more and more on the "extra-economic" bonds that they manage to construct along with the struggles in the other social fields included in this project.

4. *Emancipatory multiculturalism, cultural citizenship and justice.* The crisis of Western modernity shows that the failure of the progressive projects toward the improvement of the opportunities and living conditions of subordinate groups, inside and outside the Western world, was in part due to a lack of cultural legitimacy. This is true even of human rights movements. The universality of human rights must not be taken for granted, for the idea of human dignity may be formulated in different "languages." Rather than being suppressed in the name of postulated universalisms, differences must become mutually intelligible through translation work. Since the construction of modern nations was mainly accomplished by crushing the cultural and national identities of minorities (and often even majorities), recognizing multiculturalism and multinationality carries with itself an aspiration toward self-determination. The case of indigenous peoples is in this regard extremely significant. Even though cultures are relative, relativism is wrong, both as a philosophical and a political stance. In this regard, the potential for a counter-hegemonic globalization resides in developing criteria to distinguish emancipatory from reactionary forms of multiculturalism and self-determination. Aspiring to multiculturalism and self-determination often takes on the social form of a struggle for justice and citizenship, implying calling for alternative forms of law and justice, and new systems of citizenship. The plurality of juridical orders, made visible by the crisis of the nation-state, carries in itself, whether explicitly or implicitly, the idea of multiple citizenships coexisting in the same geopolitical field. In conditions to be made explicit, non-state juridical orders may be the embryo of non-state public spheres, as well as the institutional basis of self-determination, as is the case of indigenous justice. This will be so, however, only if the forms of informal, local and popular communitarian justice are an integral part of the struggles or initiatives occurring in the remaining social fields. For instance, popular or communitarian justice as part of initiatives of participatory democracy, and indigenous justice as a component of self-determination or the conservation of biodiversity.

5. *The defense of biodiversity and the struggle for the recognition of rival knowledges.* Thanks to the progress observed in the last decades in the life sciences, biotechnology, and micro-electronics, biodiversity is one of the most precious and sought-after "natural resources." For pharmaceutical and biotechnological firms, biodiversity increasingly appears at the center of the most

spectacular and lucrative product developments of the next decades. As a rule, biodiversity occurs in the South and mainly in lands historically owned by indigenous peoples. While technologically advanced countries try to broaden intellectual property rights and the right to patent biodiversity, some peripheral countries, indigenous movements, and solidary NGOs try to guarantee the preservation and reproduction of biodiversity by protecting the land, ways of life, and traditional knowledges of the indigenous and peasant communities. The most recent cleavages between the North and the South concern largely the issue of access to biodiversity on a global scale. Although all the topics included in this project raise epistemological problems to the extent that they state the validity of knowledges that have been rejected by hegemonic scientific knowledge, biodiversity is probably the topic in which the clash among rival knowledges is more obvious, and probably more unequal. It is also the topic in which the confrontation between hegemonic globalization and counter-hegemonic globalization is more violent, as witness the current designations of bio-imperialism and bio-piracy.

Topic one, concerning participatory democracy, is treated in volume one of this series. Topics two, on alternative production systems, and three, on new labor internationalism, are dealt with in volume two, while topics four, on emancipation and citizenship, and five, on biodiversity and rival knowledges, are discussed in volume three.

Notes

- 1 A highly revised edition, titled *Toward a New Legal Common Sense: Law, Globalization and Emancipation*, was published by Butterworths (London, 2002).
- 2 On these forms of power see Santos, 1995: 403–455 and Santos, 2002: 353–416.

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