

**Transnational Activism and Global Transformation:
Post-National Politics and Activism for Climate Justice and Food Sovereignty**
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Abstract

The recent upsurge in protests around the world are both a response to rising financial and food insecurity and a sign of growing popular awareness that fundamental changes are needed in our world-system to ensure the survival of our planet and society. In this paper we argue that we are witnessing the emergence of new sphere of transnational activism whose practices, identities, and analyses are transformative, movement-centered, and autonomous from the inter-state order. This contrasts earlier times when transnational social movement organizations were deeply engaged in and responsive to the agendas and political arenas defined by states, particularly the UN. United Nations global conferences and other inter-governmental institutions helped bring activists together across national divides and created spaces where new analyses, identities, and organizing practices could develop. This emerging movement space has nurtured a wider array of counter-hegemonic and antisystemic analyses and practices and is transforming world politics in important ways. We examine activism around the international climate change negotiations and food sovereignty to demonstrate the presence of what we refer to as the “World Political Counter Movement” or a “Sub-System of World Politics.”

Transnational Social Movements & Global Politics

Recent uprisings extending from the Middle East through much of Europe and most recently across the United States suggest that social movements around the world are converging around similar critiques of global power and social exclusion, and that they increasingly transgress the conventional boundaries of world politics. They do so by expanding the practices and discourses of global politics as well as individual and collective identities beyond those defined by the inter-state political arena. Such transgressions of the dominant institutional sphere have been key to the expressions of “real utopias” documented by Erik Olin Wright and others (see Wright 2010; Salleh 2012; Karides 2012).¹ In fact, we might speak of these movements as

¹“Real Utopias” was the theme of the 2012 American Sociological Association annual meeting, and sociologists at this meeting offered diverse perspectives and analyses of this phenomena. More extensive consideration of proposals for ‘real utopias’ can be found at www.realutopias.com.

helping to “normalize” utopias, given that they deliberately and actively articulate, popularize and enact alternatives to the dominant economic and political order.

Speaking of the emancipatory movements of today, Paul Rankin sees an emerging logic or set of inter-linked values that characterize the rather diverse groups comprising these movements:

The prevailing pretransition ethos—consumerism, individualism, and anthropocentrism—has given way to another triad: *quality of life, human solidarity, and ecocentrism*. These values spring from a sense of, a yearning for, wholeness at all levels: self, species, and biosphere. They are manifestations in the human heart of the interdependence of the world, the defining feature of the present historical era, the Planetary Phase of Civilization. (Rankin 2012, emphasis ours)

These three core values are evident in many diverse struggles for economic and social change. As longtime activist and scholar Gustave Massiah explains,

Social movements recommend a break: that of social, ecological and democratic transition. They put forward new concepts, new ways of producing and consuming. Some of these include: the Commons and new types of property, control of finance, “*buen-vivir*” that is well-being and prosperity without growth, the reinvention of democracy, common and differentiated responsibilities, rights-based public services, etc. The goal is that the organization of societies as well as of the world, be based on the access to rights for all. (Massiah 2012)

These core values are enacted in “real utopias,” that is, concrete practices and projects that are employed by groups that are either aiming to advance larger transformative goals or to simply meet their community’s basic needs (see, e.g., Wright 2011; Salleh 2012; Karides 2012; Brewer 2012). What is also noteworthy is that, despite the absence of direct organizational or interpersonal ties, protests in different places have tended to embrace similar projects, such as solidarity economies or participatory budgeting, as well as common practices such as decentralized leadership, resistance to conventional policy demands, and a reliance on a multiplicity of organizations and networks (see, e.g., Campbell 2011; Smith 2011). The similarities in analyses and strategies suggest that these distinct struggles are being shaped by a larger context of contestation over the global structures of wealth and power. Significantly, as Rankin observes, these movements have expressed shared aspirations and norms that help bring unity to diverse struggles, connecting many local mobilizations in a global revolution.

Transnational networks are infrastructures that have helped ideas, organizational models, and inter-personal connections flow and converge across national borders. They have fostered people's ability to articulate and implement these shared aspirations and values. Such networks between social movement organizations and other actors in the global political environment have changed rapidly in recent decades, largely in response to the demands for wider solidarity (Smith 2005). By examining these changes we can better understand contemporary mobilizations against the globalized economy and transnational corporations.

A considerable body of research in social movements demonstrates how social and political institutions define opportunities and constraints for social movements, which in turn introduce ideas and models of action that help transform social activism as well as the system itself. This study explores how transnational organizational networks have developed within a changing global institutional context. The United Nations global conferences of the 1990s helped fuel transnational organizing and encouraged a proliferation of new organizations, networks and analyses of global problems. This dramatic expansion helped increase attention even among mainstream observers to the roles civil society actors were playing in world politics.² By engaging in these international arenas, movements have helped advance norms of human rights and ecological sustainability over territorial sovereignty as the basis for legitimate authority. In other words, movements and their allies can increasingly challenge states' authority in the world-system by pointing to contradictions between state practices and the normative elements of what world-systems analysts refer to as the "geoculture" of the modern world-system (Wallerstein 2004).

Engagement with the UN conferences also allowed activist groups to see the limits of inter-state arenas for addressing the world's most pressing problems (Alvarez 1998; Friedman, Clark, and Hochstetler 2005; Rajagopal 2003). We argue that as social movements have engaged with the inter-state arena, they have developed networks and analyses that have both drawn them into greater engagement with inter-state politics, and in more recent years contributed to a rise in transnational social movement activity outside the conventional boundaries of inter-state politics. Because it both relates to and exists outside the boundaries of the inter-state system, movement

² For instance, following the massive anti-war protest on the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the *New York Times* referred to global civil society as "the second superpower." More recently, *Time* magazine declared "the protester" person of the year (2011). And mainstream foreign policy journal *Foreign Affairs* has paid increasing attention to global civil society in recent years.

in this arena of world politics holds greater potential for transforming the world-system than did earlier struggles. Movements working in this arena recognize the incompatibility of the values of *buen vivir*, or living well, human solidarity, and earth-community with the existing inter-state order, and they are seeking a transition to a new set of rules and practices for the world (see, e.g., Cavanagh and Mander 2004; Shiva 2005).

The rise of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement and protests in Europe and the Middle East follows several decades of expanding transnational social movement activism. Although these movements have largely framed their struggles as national-level struggles (albeit with some degree of transnational communication and solidarity), the larger claims activists are making for more participatory democracy and reductions in economic inequality echo claims advanced by earlier transnational movements—including the most recent wave of protests framed as the “alter-globalization” or “global justice” movement (Smith 2008; Plyers 2010; Juris 2008). The temporal sequencing of these struggles and the commonalities in their claims and practices suggest that there are important connections among these efforts that merit exploration (Smith 2011).

These national level protests have arisen at a time of growing militancy by transnational networks of activists and organizations working to address problems such as global economic inequality and climate change. Since the late 1990s, a growing collection of activist groups have participated in the World Social Forum process and transnational campaigns such as those advocating for climate justice or food sovereignty. These initiatives reflect an important shift in transnational activism from a politics centered in the United Nations and in discourses that were largely defined by state interests, to one that is increasingly radical and autonomous from inter-state arenas.

Whereas earlier patterns of transnational activism were characterized by largely complementary relations between social movements and intergovernmental organizations (especially the United Nations), more recent years have seen rapid growth of more radical transnational networks operating increasingly outside the UN framework. They have also generated explicit opposition to the global financial institutions—the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization—which are seen as the primary agents

advancing neoliberal globalization (Smith 2008; Sikkink 2005).³ Significantly, the rise in more contentious forms of transnational activism coincides with the decline of the United States as the global hegemonic power and the rise of other new threats to U.S. hegemony (Arrighi and Silver 1999; Wallerstein 2003). For instance, as China has gained economic clout it has exerted increased economic and political leverage in international politics. But in addition, even small states like Bolivia, Ecuador, and even tiny Bhutan have challenged U.S. hegemony by resisting bilateral economic pressures and by advancing counter-hegemonic agendas in the inter-state arena.⁴ In light of these developments, some analysts have argued that we're seeing the development of a *critical sub-system of world politics* that is somewhat autonomous of the inter-state system and that contains *both* counter-hegemonic and antisystemic elements. This arena of world politics is *counter-hegemonic* in that it challenges U.S. and Northern hegemony in the world-system. And it is *antisystemic* in that it resists the inter-state monopoly of power and authority as well as the capitalist logic of the world-system (Jaeger 2007; Smith and Wiest 2012).

States, Movements, and Social Change

Research on social movements is based on the observation that contention between social movement challengers and political authorities has helped shape, and continues to influence, the structure and character of contemporary nation-states (Tilly 1978; Markoff 1996; Clemens 1996; Katzenstein 1998). Scholarship on transnational activism shows a similar dynamic in the inter-state arena (Smith 1995; Smith et al., eds. 1997; see also Kaldor 2003; Khagram 2004; Keck and Sikkink 1998). More recent research on transnational activism emphasizes the importance of UN global conferences as catalysts to the increased numbers of transnational activist organizations (Friedman, Clark and Hochstetler 2005; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith et al. 1997; Smith 2008; Smith and Wiest 2012). Analysts have argued that the United Nations conferences provided focal points and targets for activists, enabling groups to come together across national and other divides. Moreover, the conferences provided physical spaces where activists from different

³ The policies of neoliberal globalization aim to expand international trade by reducing national regulations and tariffs that impede trade and investment flows, cutting government spending, privatizing state industries, and reducing states' roles in providing social welfare and labor protection.

⁴ The Bolivian case is explored below in the global climate negotiations. Ecuador's most recent challenge to state hegemony is its granting of asylum to WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange. And Bhutan has advanced a "Gross National Happiness" project that seems harmless, but in the current context has the potential to widen cracks in the capitalist system's ideological foundation by questioning the inherent value of wealth and money and by extension the institutions designed to promote wealth accumulation.

countries, sectors, and classes could meet, share experiences and analyses, and develop new understandings of global problems and their solutions. Significantly, the UN norms of inclusion and equity helped secure new resources that allowed greater numbers of civil society activists from poor countries to participate, expanding the geographic diversity and perspectives of existing transnational networks.

This synergistic relationship between intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and transnational activist networks is captured in the “boomerang” metaphor advanced in the widely cited work of Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998). These scholars argue that international norms and treaty bodies that help monitor state compliance with these norms create targets for activists seeking to redress national grievances. Transnational activists are thus seen as allies of intergovernmental agencies in the work of strengthening and enhancing compliance with international norms. And international law serves to legitimate many of the claims advanced by social movements while also helping nurture transnational identities and visions of alternative world orders.

The political logics at work in the international arena, moreover, encourage the development and expansion of broad and geographically diverse transnational networks that can mobilize political pressure on states. This encourages advocacy groups to expand their memberships and to reach out especially to groups in under-represented parts of the world. Thus, in addition to helping focus groups on international projects, international institutional dynamics contribute to the expansion of transnational networks, thereby enhancing the capacities for transnational social movements. A large body of research on these transnational associations has shown that, while the different structural positions of activists have led to considerable tensions between activists in the global North and South, over time many activists and groups have confronted inequalities within their ranks and in the process developed new understandings and perspectives of social problems and of the world’s political and economic systems (e.g., Hertel 2006; Rothman and Oliver 1999; Snyder 2003; Smith 2008). Thus, by participating in United Nations politics, activist groups are exposed to ideas and networks that enhance their potential for radicalization.

But while the UN conferences in some cases fueled the formation of new transnational organizations, analyses, and identities, they also contributed to what Jaeger (2007) refers to as the “depoliticization” of global civil society. UN discourses and agendas “[d]iscursively

harnessed [civil society actors through] governmentalities of human security and social development” (p. 258). By the mid-1990s, activists were pointing to the problems of “NGOization” and the “nonprofit industrial complex,” or the professionalization of civil society groups in ways that undermined their critical analyses and strategies (Alvarez 1999; Mendoza 2002; Paffenholz and Spurk 2006). UN conferences—while potentially transformative in that they focus states on developing new practices in response to shared global problems—are constrained by the UN’s organizational mandate and membership. The UN members are states, not individuals, and therefore the agendas and discourses of UN conferences are ultimately defined by state interests and increasingly by the interests of capital. This has served to constrain the frames of political debate within the UN conferences and to limit the range of possible solutions to those deemed acceptable to the most powerful states. In addition, by the 1990s, corporate actors became more involved in UN conferences—largely in response to what they saw as growing opposition from civil society groups in international arenas (Bruno and Karliner 2002; Karliner 1997). Table 1 summarizes the major historical shifts in the character of transnational activism since the late 19th century.

Table 1 about here

The story we intend to stress with this table is the ways interactions between social movements and states and their agents have shaped the dominant political institutions we take for granted as the stage on which global conflicts are carried out. Even before there were states as we know them today, popular groups were coming together to demand democratic rights and to define limits on state authority. They worked across nascent national boundaries to share ideas and strategies as they shaped the formal structures of the modern state (Markoff 1996; Tilly 2004; Smith 2004). By the 1800s transnational activists were struggling to advance notions of individual rights, to end the slave trade and in socialist organizations to place moral boundaries around the economy and the state. The experiences of women activists in abolitionist struggles helped give rise to women’s own demands for recognition and citizenship (Rupp 1997). Peace activists were also working internationally to define the limits of warfare and to link legitimate state authority to humane practices on the battlefields (Finnemore 1996; Chatfield 1997). These struggles helped expand transnational linkages and understandings of human rights and global

citizenship outside nationalism, and they contributed to the development of the international legal system. Early transnational organizations formed in this period persist today.

The early post-WWII period of transnational activism was shaped by decolonization and the United Nations. In contrast to later activism, much of the transnational organizing this period was characterized by altruistic relations between the global North and South and on supporting anti-colonial and pro-independence networks. These relations helped shape later civil and human rights struggles in the United States and elsewhere (Chabot 2002; Livezey 1989; Rucht 2000). Moreover, the experiences of transnational activists working together helped inform subsequent transnational work. The rise of human rights organizing in the 1960s helped expand popular awareness of the relationships between the foreign policies of core states and human rights practices elsewhere, and they contributed to an important strand of transnational organizing to limit state authority and protect individual rights and dignity (Clark 2003). The 1980s and 1990s was characterized by a rapidly expanding population of formal transnational organizations and more widespread experience in transnational activism among the larger, non-elite public. Growing awareness and appreciation of the demand for multilateralism and the workings of the United Nations emerged from the experiences of participation in UN global conferences. By the late 1990s more activists were organizing to critique what they saw as contradictions between the norms articulated in UN treaties on human rights and environmental protections and the practices of the international financial institutions—the World Bank, IMF, and World Trade Organization (see Smith 2008; Sikkink 2005).

The contradictions between the practices of the financial institutions and the norms embraced by transnational human rights and environmental activists, coupled with a recognition of the inherent limitations of the United Nations, contributed to new practices and organizing forms in the most recent period. We've thus seen greater militarism and opposition to both the financial institutions and the UN system and growing efforts to expand the spaces for transnational activism outside the inter-state arena. We discuss these changes further in the following section, but we want to highlight some of the dynamics that lie behind these shifts in the character transnational activism. First, it is contradictions between the norms advocated by popular groups and the practices of authorities that encourage innovation and expansion of transnational activism. Over time, activism has led to greater institutionalization of norms, even as states and other powerful actors have resisted efforts to be held accountable to such norms.

Again, the contradictions between norms (some of which are now institutionalized in treaties and other international agreements) and the practices of powerful actors drive changes in social movements. The experiences of transnational communication and struggle contribute to expanding the power base—the resources, knowledge, and networks--of opponents of the status quo, thereby enhancing the infrastructures for potential challenges to the state by transnationally organized citizens.

This history of social movement engagement with the inter-state arena and especially the more recent transnational mobilizing around the UN conferences both advanced transnational activism and exposed activists to the limitations of inter-state arenas for addressing major global issues like climate change or equitable economic development. For instance, by the mid-1990s, activist-scholar David Korten, founder of the People Centered Development Forum was among a handful of UN observers beginning to sound the alarm about the expanding corporate influence in the United Nations. He criticized the flawed ideological culture that was gaining a stronger foothold in the UN after the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development and that was displacing the voices of the growing movements of people mobilizing in UN arenas:

Those of us who have been studying these issues have long known of the strong alignment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and the IMF to the corporate agenda. By contrast the United Nations has seemed a more open, democratic and people friendly institution. What I found so shattering was the strong evidence that the differences I have been attributing to the United Nations are largely cosmetic. (Korten 1997)

Alvarez similarly found that many feminist groups recognized the limitations of the inter-state arena, and she traces the development of autonomous and hybrid feminist identities arising from debates begun as part of the UN World Conferences on Women (2000). By the early 2000s many activist groups were seeking alternatives to the United Nations conferences as spaces where they could meet to articulate alternatives to the corporate-led globalization being defined by these institutions. This led, among other things, to the launch of the World Social Forum process in 2001, which has encouraged a proliferation of local, national, regional, and thematic gatherings around the idea that “another world is possible” (see, e.g., Santos 2006; Fisher and Ponniah 2003; Smith et al. 2012).

Reflecting this trend, in their investigation of patterns of transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) over the past half-century, Smith and Wiest (2012) found that while the UN conferences encouraged the formation of new transnational organizations, this engagement with UN conference processes did not lead TSMOs to form more extensive links to inter-governmental organizations. Instead, groups formed around the years of UN conferences were *less likely* to report ties to inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) than organizations formed in other years. But whereas experience with global conferences failed to nurture strong ties between TSMOs and the inter-state system, it did encourage more connections to other civil society actors while also fostering greater participation from activists outside the rich countries of the global north. Smith and Wiest draw from these macro-level findings and an array of qualitative studies to make the case that this pattern signals the emergence of what Jaeger (2007) refers to as a critical *subsystem of world politics*. Figure 1 summarizes this argument.

Figure 1 about here

The figure illustrates how patterns of transnational social movement organizations have changed with time, and how interactions between IGOs and TSMOs are related to these changes. A key point is that global political arenas are fluid and changing as actors—including states, international officials, corporations and other non-state actors—compete for political influence. Whereas UN global conferences convened to address global problems encouraged transnational organizational formation and drew new groups into the inter-state arena, over time groups' engagement with these institutions enhanced their connections to other global actors—especially participants from the global south and other international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs).⁵ Also, TSMOs developed more regional structures as groups within regions found opportunities to meet and identify their shared needs and preferences (Smith 2005; Wiest and Smith 2007). Such developments are seen to enhance the counter-hegemonic potential of transnational networks by expanding the voices of non-state actors and actors from outside the core in these networks and shaping global awareness and identity among participants.

⁵ TSMOs are a subset of INGOs which are explicitly organized to advance some social or political change. Because of this focus, TSMOs are expected to play leading roles in the politics of social change. Whereas other INGOs may become involved in social change movements, their organizational purpose lies elsewhere and thus they are not expected to maintain ongoing leadership roles in movements.

The influence of more diverse networks on TSMO agendas is further reflected in the increase Smith and Wiest found in the numbers of groups embracing multi-issue rather than single-issue frames. Single-issue frames have been adopted by many groups in response to the structure of inter-state politics, which tends to compartmentalize issues in order to facilitate inter-state negotiations. Such compartmentalization is reflected in the framing of global conferences and treaties, and it tends to conceal important inequalities and conflicts. For example, disarmament negotiations focus on specific reductions in weapons and armed forces but leave out discussions of how the military industrial complex affects broader social welfare. And official discussions of development have typically failed to question the logics and impacts of globalized capitalism and growth-oriented policies, ignoring evidence and movements against the anti-democratic and counter-productive results of “development” practices. Smith and Wiest found evidence that transnational activism is resisting such compartmentalization, as newer TSMOs were more likely to embrace multi-issue frames, which challenge inter-state agendas by stressing the interconnections among issues such as trade and the environment, or human rights and the global economy.

Significantly, these patterns of greater involvement of members from the global south, greater connection to international NGOs, more regional structures and multi-issue frames were even stronger for TSMOs formed in the years surrounding UN global conferences. Because these patterns can be seen as enhancing the counterhegemonic and anti-systemic potential of transnational groups, it suggests that civil society engagement with the inter-state arena does not necessarily lead to co-optation and reformism. Rather, such engagement can provide a foundation for radical transformation of activists’ thoughts and actions.

Given these patterns, it is perhaps not surprising that the mid- to late-1990s was also characterized by the growth of collective action contesting the global political order. These protests largely focused on the global financial institutions—the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization--and on international trade agreements. Although there was evidence of opposition beginning in the 1980s, by the mid-1990s larger networks of activist groups converged around the 50th anniversary celebration of these institutions, arguing that “fifty years is enough!” (Broad and Hecksher 2003; Smith 2008; Gerhards and Rucht 1992). Protests against these institutions as well as the Group of 8 countries (now the Group of 20 or G20) continued—and at times were very large and militant—through much of the 1990s and

early 2000s. The expansion of global analyses and awareness of the connections between policies of economic globalization and local experiences was encouraged both by the proliferation of transnational organizations and by the practices of the World Social Forum encouraging more localized forums addressing the connections between local and global. Thus, local and national protests against corporate power (or against entrenched Western allies) are more appropriately understood as expressions of global rather than local conflict.

von Bülow's research on transnational activism against international trade agreements in the Americas suggests how this localization of global analysis relates to organizational changes in the structure of transnational networks. Her research over more than a decade showed how, over time, transnational networks helped cultivated greater capacities for national and sub-national organizations to forge direct transnational linkages. Thus, transnational networks have become less dependent upon formal transnational structures for their effective operation. Because of the development of new skills and models for transnational organizing, resources, ideas, and experiences can be shared directly between local groups in different countries. The World Social Forum process has further contributed to the articulation and dissemination of such organizing models. It has encouraged global-local connections and analyses through the proliferation of regional, national, local, and thematic social forums and through ongoing dialogue and consultation across these gatherings (see Smith et al., eds. 2012; Juris 2008; Sen and Waterman 2009).

While we find evidence suggesting that TSMOs' engagement in inter-state arenas may contribute to their radicalization, there is also considerable evidence of growing critiques among activists of the problem of "NGOization," or co-optation of social change groups by international institutions like the World Bank or the United Nations and even by transnational corporations. Civil society engagement with global institutions has led to co-optation by some groups (Bebbington, Hickey, and Mitlin 2008; Beckfield 2003; Ferguson 2006; Goldman 2005; INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence 2007; Manji and O'Coill 2002). Nevertheless, Smith and Wiest argue that the patterns described above, coupled with expanded transnational protest and the emergence of World Social Forums and other autonomous civil society arenas, have helped groups resist such co-optation and increased the anti-systemic potential of transnational social movements. They have done so by strengthening relationships among critical elements of civil society and increasing attentiveness to and scrutiny of elite co-optation efforts.

As networks among activists develop and strengthen, it becomes more possible for activist groups to hold each other accountable to norms defined by their subaltern networks rather than by the dominant political culture. These more cohesive networks both provide support for groups facing pressure to conform to elite programs and sanction those that succumb to such pressure (Smith and Wiest 2012, chapter 5; see also Bond, Brutus, and Setshevi 2005).⁶

In addition to helping neutralize elite efforts to undermine movement impact, expanded transnational movement networks also have strengthened the transformative potential of civil society actors by helping articulate solutions to global problems that lie outside the range of options deemed acceptable to states, and by expanding the possibilities for transnational alliances to mobilize support for these alternatives. Pianta and Silva show that civil society groups have shifted their focus from organizing parallel conferences at official summits to independent meetings on civil-society agendas. Whereas before 2000, just 10% of all transnational civil society meetings were held outside the context of official meetings, by 2003 nearly 60% of transnational civil society meetings were held outside the inter-state arena (2003:389). It is not surprising, then, that along with a dramatic rise in autonomous civil society gatherings since the early-2000s, we have also seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of transnational protests (Podobnik 2005).⁷ The shift in the momentum of transnational activism from UN conferences to these more autonomous and contentious gatherings of activists outside the inter-state framework has helped generate what we're calling a critical subsystem of world politics. This space has enabled the development and strengthening of transnational networks between activist groups from the global North and South and fostered alliances between movements and critical actors in the inter-state arena. Such networks may be providing the impetus for political and social innovations that can fundamentally alter the world-system. As protest movements develop in national contexts around the world, these already-existing networks and related forums and campaigns are providing focal points and momentum for

⁶ Additional examples of the ability of movement-centered networks to sanction groups that support reformist neoliberal agendas include the experiences of the UN Global Compact, wherein very few civil society groups opted to join this UN-led initiative to engage in "partnerships" with business and civil society organizations and in several responses to Oxfam reports supporting genetically modified food and trade liberalization as strategies for development.

⁷ Such protests have continued despite the repressive atmosphere following September 11, 2001, which dampened protest in the United States. A growing number of protest events are organized transnationally, but many are "global days of action" taking place simultaneously in different national contexts, in response to grievances linked to global economic and/or political policies.

activists seeking to develop their analyses of what changes are needed in the inter-state system and to build transnational alliances capable of advancing such initiatives.⁸

Following Jaeger (2007), we refer to this emerging space or arena for collective action on world political matters a “sub-system of world politics.” Drawing from Polanyi, Jaeger sees this subsystem as a world political counter-movement that responds to the experiences and pressures social change advocates have witnessed in the formal inter-state order, where states have preserved their privileged leadership role. Key features of this space are its movement-centrism, as opposed to state-centrism in which governments defined the arenas of negotiation and the agendas of debate; the privileged role of civil society; and an increasingly coherent and globally relevant set of identities, discourses, and practices. Also important to note is that we intend with the overlapping circles in figure 1 to show that actors in the subsystem maintain relationships with some actors in the inter-state and national arenas, so movement politics is not framed in binary, oppositional terms. As we show with our cases, movements work with counter-hegemonic agents in the dominant political sphere—including some states and inter-state organizations such as international treaty bodies and agencies of the United Nations—to advance new modes of thinking, speaking and acting in world politics.

Below we outline two important examples of how this subsystem of world politics is affecting struggle over major global conflicts. We examine popular organizing around climate change and food sovereignty. In the case of climate change, social movements have long been organizing within the UN framework to shape government commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The World People’s Assembly on the Rights of Mother Earth was held in Cochabamba, Bolivia in direct response to the failures of the United Nations’s climate change negotiations. The Cochabamba Assembly and the Agreement it produced exhibit many of the distinct features of the subsystem of world politics. While launched by the government of Bolivia, it was an attempt to combine efforts of counter-hegemonic states and civil society groups to advance more radical responses to climate change. Food sovereignty is a discursive

⁸ For instance, organizers of Arab Spring, European anti-Austerity, and Occupy Wall Street protests attended the Global Preparatory Assembly for the 2013 World Social Forum in Monastir, Tunisia (http://openfsm.net/projects/wsfic_fsmci/wsfic-fsm13-lettret2-en). Organizers of the United States Social Forum have also been discussing ways to build upon and engage with activists becoming mobilized into the Occupy Wall Street and other anti-austerity/pro-democracy protests (<http://www.ussf2010.org/node/373>; <http://www.ussf2010.org/node/372>).

challenge by social movements to dominant framings of conflicts over access to and availability of food, which have been labeled “food security.” Because the notion of food sovereignty explicitly asserts the rights of people to the means of food production, it treats land rights as the key to addressing problems of hunger and food insecurity and challenges the commodification of food. In both of these cases, we see how the emerging subsystem of world politics has enabled transnational alliances to raise increasingly coherent and unified challenges to states’ and capital’s hegemony in the world-system. In addition, by framing conflicts in ways that connect the counter-hegemonic interests⁹ of some states with more transformative interests of social movements, politics in this arena offer new potential for challenging the world-system itself.

The Global Climate Crisis and the Cochabamba World People’s Assembly on the Rights of Mother Earth

Was it too much to have asked of the world's governments, which performed such miracles in developing stealth bombers and drone warfare, global markets and trillion-dollar bailouts, that they might spend a tenth of the energy and resources they devoted to these projects on defending our living planet? It seems, sadly, that it was. (Monbiot 2012).

Global climate change poses the most serious challenge to humans and other species, and yet the inter-state process to reduce threats from global warming has been an utter failure. The Climate Change Convention was first adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and many observers saw the process as hopelessly corrupted by U.S. intransigence and corporate influence (Bruno and Karliner 2002; Karliner 1997).¹⁰ By the 20th anniversary of the once celebrated UNCED, few activists held out any hope for an agreement. Many had previously abandoned such hope, and journalist George Monbiot encouraged more to do so following the “Rio+20” conference in the summer of 2012. He noted that:

Giving up on global agreements or, more accurately, on the prospect that they will substantially alter our relationship with the natural world, is almost a relief. It means

⁹ Counter-hegemony here refers to the interests some states have in challenging U.S. dominance/hegemony in the world-system. Such a stance is not necessarily anti-systemic, but typically seeks to replace one hegemonic leader with another.

¹⁰ The December 2011 UN Climate Change Conference in Durban had an even larger corporate presence, as evidenced by the prominence of the carbon market ‘solutions’ (Marien 2011; Solón 2011).

walking away from decades of anger and frustration. It means *turning away from a place in which we have no agency to one in which we have, at least, a chance of being heard.* (emphasis ours)

This quote reflects much of what can be heard in activist discourses surrounding climate change. The fact that, amid growing evidence of the urgency of the global climate crisis, the largest per capita emitter of greenhouse gases refused to acknowledge or respond to the reality of global warming made a mockery of the inter-state process and drove many to find alternative means of survival. But Monbiot suggests that there is also recognition that an alternative to inter-state politics exists, and that this alternative space promises to be more receptive to activists' claims. This space is what we are calling the "sub-system of world politics," and we outline elements of how the climate change debate has developed within it.

In 2009, the UN General Assembly declared April 22nd International Mother Earth Day, supporting the resolution proposed and promoted by Bolivia. Supposedly a herald of a new century of the Earth's rights – where the 20th century was that of human rights – the resolution was rather quickly seen as an empty gesture. The December 2009 Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change yielded little in the way of effective international agreement, as the United States and other major greenhouse gas emitters and corporate lobbyists obstructed efforts to advance real changes in policy. The meeting was criticized by a number of leaders in the global South, as well as civil society actors, as "flawed" and "undemocratic" (Democracy Now 2009). This was despite the growing evidence of the effects of climate change.¹¹ In response to the persistent failures of the inter-state arena to generate an agreement, Bolivian president Evo Morales called for a global meeting outside of the formal inter-state system, inviting groups and individuals from all over the world to meet and develop a "People's Agreement." Although initially planned by the national government,¹² the Conference became – as was widely acknowledged and emphasized – civil society-organized. This hybrid, government and civil society initiative on a conflict of major global significance represents politics within the subsystem of world politics, and it demonstrates growing social movement power. The

¹¹ In its 2007/8 *Human Development Report*, the UN Development Programme argued that the existing calls for 50% cuts in greenhouse gas emissions over the next ten years if the world is to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

¹² Morales is widely respected among transnational activists for his leadership on global climate change, despite the fact that as a head of state, he has backed national policies that are inconsistent with his international environmental leadership (see, e.g., Aguirre and Cooper 2010).

Cochabamba Conference represents an attempt by movements and states to unite behind an antisystemic¹³ effort to end the stalemate in the inter-state arena.

Cochabamba embodies the subsystem in a number of ways. First, it has been put forward explicitly as *alternative or corrective to the UN* climate conference: Lander (2010) calls the Peoples' Agreement an "alternative to the so-called Copenhagen Agreement." Estrada (2010) views it as a "pole of subversion and response," and the *New Internationalist* (2010) even claims it as the "anti-UN summit." In addition, the idea of Earth as an entity with legally defensible rights fundamentally challenges the legal basis of the modern inter-state system, grounded in territorial sovereignty and anthropocentrism. Finally, although the Agreement was planned to be read to the General Assembly (Conant 2010), it does not intend for states or intergovernmental agencies to be primarily responsible for its implementation.

In fact, and this is the second distinguishing subsystem characteristic, the Agreement *relies upon civil society rather than states* for its implementation. In other words, it puts forth a *political project* rather than a policy agenda, thereby emphasizing the work of movement-building over government leadership and action (Angeles 2011; Aguirre and Cooper 2010). Civil society actors are thus agents of international policy and programmatic action addressing one of the most important challenges of our day. The Agreement calls for a global referendum on its major components:

it is essential to carry out a global referendum or popular consultation on climate change in which all are consulted regarding the following issues; the level of emission reductions on the part of developed countries and transnational corporations, financing to be offered by developed countries, the creation of an International Climate Justice Tribunal, the need for a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, and the need to change the current capitalist system. (PWCCC 2010)

In addition, civil society is to play a greater role in coordinating action and implementation, as the Agreement calls for "the building of a Global People's Movement for Mother Earth." Unlike the inter-state system which is its foil, this movement is "based on the principles of complementarity and respect for the diversity of origin and visions among its members, constituting a broad and democratic space for coordination and joint worldwide actions"

¹³ The Cochabamba conference is antisystemic in that it clearly points to the need to abolish capitalism in order to address climate change.

(PWCCC 2010). This inclusive, broad, diverse, and democratic space for change is the essence of the subsystem of world politics.

Third, the Agreement empowers less powerful states in two important ways. First, it advances the idea of a Global Climate Tribunal to allow poor states to hold more powerful ones accountable for their contributions to global warming. In addition, the Agreement calls for recognition of the “ecological debts” advanced industrialized countries have to the countries of the global South as a result of their own industrialization. By legitimizing the claims of states outside the core, the Agreement helps advance a counter-hegemonic alliance between movements and some governments and altering the balance of power that favors the existing, highly unequal inter-state system.

Finally, in contrast to most inter-state agreements and treaties, the Cochabamba Agreement offers a holistic perspective on relations among state-civil society-and the natural world. The Agreement does not simply address environmental practices and policies, but it both acknowledges and seeks to address the social effects of environmental destruction while also addressing the larger issue of how humans’ limited understanding of the natural world--and thus their relationship to it--has prevented the development of policies that address the root causes of ecosystem degradation and resource depletion. It is instead much broader and more comprehensive, calling for a radical reorientation of the basic philosophic orientations that undergird the dominant world-system. For instance, using language that parallels the World Social Forum Charter of Principles and other social movement discourse, the Conference in Cochabamba brought together critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, imperialism, militarism, and racism showing the interconnectedness of these multiple systems of exploitation and the need for their concurrent dismantling. In the first paragraph of the Agreement, the authors explain that

the corporations and governments of the so-called “developed” countries, in complicity with a segment of the scientific community, have led us to discuss climate change as a problem limited to the rise in temperature without questioning the cause, which is the capitalist system (PWCCC 2010).

Here the document directly challenges the dominant discourses surrounding inter-state climate change negotiations, pointing explicitly to the need to confront the reality that capitalism itself fuels climate change. All of these components—the authorization of marginalized civil society actors, the privileging of the needs and interests less powerful state actors, the challenging of

anthropocentrism as a basis for human society, and the exposure of incompatibilities between the capitalist system and efforts to address climate change-- make the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth indicative of the rise of an antisystemic subsystem of world politics,¹⁴ which we view as both resulting from and contributing to the growth of transnational social movement power. What is particularly noteworthy of the Cochabamba document, in addition to its transformative discourse, is its specification of particular forms and models of action required to address the climate crisis—models which seek to address a global policy matter by reaching far beyond conventional inter-state practices.

Not surprisingly, the Cochabamba agreement has been widely ignored by the key players in the inter-state political arena, and Bolivia's attempts to bring elements of the agreement to the UN General Assembly for debate have been thwarted by the U.S. and other major powers. Nevertheless, social movements have continued to focus their energies on the ideas and proposals of the Cochabamba Declaration, and the document appears to be an important source of focus and unity at a time when even those groups that have operated more in the mainstream of the inter-state process are abandoning hope that governments will adequately address the climate crisis. As one environmental activist with Friends of the Earth reported after the Rio + 20 meeting in June of 2012,

For once all popular movements whether being indigenous peoples, rural former black slave minorities, women, environmentalists, trade unions, peasants, urban reformers, solidarity economy and anti-debt movements and you name it worked on equal terms from the South and the North *at a historic global event for a radically different general politics to the dominant development model*. It moved all the parallel activities in Rio de Janeiro to better positions. It contributed to stop the eradicating of the best principles from the Rio Conference 1992. *It made the stake holder NGOs more radical which can be seen in such a statement as that of Oxfam saying that the most positive activity in Rio was the People's Summit*. (Björk 2012, emphasis added)

Significantly, while the inter-state arena has proved itself incapable of addressing the very real catastrophe of global climate change, social movements and their allies are not waiting for some new breakthrough in this arena, but rather are moving outside the inter-state deadlock to articulate and build popular support for a radically different approach to the climate change

¹⁴ Turner makes a similar argument, and sees the Cochabamba Agreement's radicalism in its "(1) a class analysis of climate change, (2) successful direct action against its corporate perpetrators, and (3) burgeoning global organization from below" (2010:20).

crisis. The values and models of action articulated in the Cochabamba Declaration both provide concrete responses to people's needs and challenge the ideological and legal authority of the dominant inter-state order.

Food Sovereignty

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has long employed a discourse about “food security” and the “right to food.” These are easily inserted into existing international legal and discursive frameworks in which states are the principal agents and guarantors of rights. Notions of state sovereignty and autonomy are privileged in this legal framework, and people have no formal mechanism through which they can advance claims to their supposed rights (see, e.g., Gibney 2008).

The concept of “food sovereignty” has been advanced by social movements as an alternative to state-defined discourses on food. The term is generally attributed to the transnational social movement organization Via Campesina, an organization made up of peasant farmers and their allies, although it has links to liberation theology movements in Latin America and shows influences of feminist and environmental organizing as well as movements for “solidarity economy” (Ferguson 2010).

In its 1999 Isarn Declaration, Via Campesina distinguished food sovereignty from food security, arguing that the supposed solution to food insecurity—increased food trade and aid—was a false one. The group argued that “food trade is not solving the ever-increasing problem of hunger. We defend the right to produce food and not the right to be able to buy cheap food.” In other words, the emphasis is on the use value rather than the exchange value of food (Ferguson 2010). Via Campesina not only links small farmers across multiple continents, they link the problems farmers face to the organization of the world-economy, much like anti-systemic critiques in other areas (i.e. Cochabamba above). The food sovereignty case also illustrates how transnational activist groups have come to frame complex global problems in terms of multiple, inter-connected issues.¹⁵ Much of the blame for hunger and malnutrition is placed on

¹⁵ For instance, organizers held a Peoples Movement Assembly on Food Sovereignty at the United States Social Forum in Detroit in 2010, linking global discourses and analyses with local community food initiatives that have recently begun to flourish in deindustrialized cities like Detroit. Smith noted how, during the course of the organizing of the U.S. Social Forum, activists in Detroit began shifting their language from “food security” to “food sovereignty.” Detroit activists attending the 2011 World Social

transnational corporations, for environmental degradation, genetically engineered seeds, and seed monopolies, but especially for their domination of international markets in food and agricultural production. Since the late 1990s, and largely as a result of Via Campesina's participation in the World Social Forum and other groupings of the global justice or alter-globalization movement, the term has been taken up by other movements active at local as well as global levels. These include, for instance local community supported agriculture initiatives, the slow food movement, and farmer cooperatives as well as transnational policy advocacy groups (Borras Jr. 2008; Martínez-Torres and Rosset 2010; McMichael 2008; von Bülow 2010).

Despite its prevalence within social movement networks, the discourse of food sovereignty has—understandably—been resisted in official circles. Nevertheless, it has gained some traction in the inter-governmental realm in recent years. An internet search on “food sovereignty” on the FAO website yielded 165,000 hits, virtually all in documents written by civil society groups or about analyses and conferences of NGOs. In comparison, “right to food” and “food rights” yielded 152,600 and “food security” nearly 3 million hits. These latter terms were more likely to be present in official publications and plans, in contrast to the civil society documents where we found food sovereignty references. Food security was the original term used by FAO, starting in 1974, and has since been revised and expanded multiple times, to include issues of access and personal well-being. The initial definition – “availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices” – was drastically altered in 1996 at the World Food Summit, and in 2001 was replaced by the one still in use today – food security is “a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO 2003). Now the right to food is often placed under the umbrella of food security; the Committee on World Food Security adopted guidelines in 2004 to support the “progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security,” where the use of “right” aligns with the established human rights discourse (FAO 2004). More importantly, this discourse supports corporate involvement in a capitalist-oriented and globalized food production and distribution system that is controlled by states.

Forum in Dakar also remarked on the parallels they observed between gentrification in their city and African activists presentations on land grabbing trends in Africa.

To challenge this dominant framing of food-related concerns, Via Campesina coined the term “food sovereignty” in 1996 and brought it to the World Food Summit that same year. It has worked tirelessly since to spread the idea (Martinez-Torres and Rosset 2010). Our analysis of FAO documents shows that civil society has been working to advance notions of food sovereignty through their engagement with the FAO, but it was only after 2002 that we found the term mentioned in documents linked to the FAO website. Within the FAO, food sovereignty is often framed in terms of the right to food. Thus, we find a number of documents indicating civil society efforts to connect notions of food sovereignty to the protection of rights. This approach has found mixed success (NGO/CSO Forum 2004). Nevertheless, food sovereignty has not been taken up by the FAO to the extent that security has been. In 2002, the World Food Summit: five years later included an NGO Forum for Food Sovereignty, but the term was not mentioned in the summit’s official declaration. The NGO/CSO (civil society organization) Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty began in 2006. By 2008, as the effects of the financial and food crises were being felt even in the global North, and the critiques of neoliberalism inherent in Via Campesina’s food sovereignty became increasingly pertinent and obvious, the term became a more common topic or theme at FAO-affiliated conferences.

More recently, however, we see some important advances for the food sovereignty agenda in the Organization of American States (OAS). In the summer of 2012, the OAS General Assembly adopted the "Declaration of Cochabamba on Food Security with Sovereignty in the Americas," which begins to integrate food sovereignty discourses and practices (such as the recognition of land rights and the need to preserve local food traditions and cultures) into policy making in the region (OAS 2012). The document notes the need for governments to prioritize the right to food at all times, even mentioning in several places the notion of “buen vivir” or living well, a concept that has been central in movement contexts such as the World Social Forums and the World People’s Conference on Climate Change discussed above. It acknowledges in several places the incompatibilities between market forces and the realization of the right to food. Finally, it helps advance the idea of food sovereignty in the inter-state arena by requesting that the Permanent Council of the OAS convene a special meeting on food and nutrition security in the Americas, instructing it to consult with other international agencies (including regional Institutes and the FAO) in preparing this meeting. Thus, we see the infiltration of ideas and solutions from the movement arena into the inter-state one.

As was the case with the Cochabamba conference, we find interactions of social movement actors and state and/or inter-governmental authorities being used to advance counter-hegemonic and antisystemic agendas. For instance, Ferguson (2010) reports on the movement's influence on organizing in the United States, where the US Food Sovereignty Alliance¹⁶ was formed in 2008:

Thus the stage is set for the growth of a U.S. food sovereignty movement. We can learn from our neighbors to the south in Mexico not only how important the demand for food sovereignty is for promoting grassroots democracy and basic human rights around food for our own population, but also how important promoting fair trade solidarity in what food imports we buy as consumers is for our neighbors, and particularly for rural women.

In more recent years, the analysis suggested by the term food sovereignty has further led activists to draw attention to the problem they've dubbed "land grabbing," or land speculation by international investors that is seen as a strong and growing threat to food sovereignty across the global South as well as the North (see Cochrane 2011). Although land grabbing, in the form of coerced seizures of another's land, has existed for centuries, its present incarnation is a more recent development. Following the food and financial crises of 2007 and 2008, when food prices spiked, land grabbing became a very profitable business. National governments that rely on food imports to feed their populations as well as individual and corporate investors were drawn to land as a lucrative new form of foreign investment. Investors began to buy huge tracts of land in poorer countries for food, cash crops, or biofuel crops. According to the World Bank, 46 million hectares of large farmland acquisitions occurred between October 2008 and August 2009, and two-thirds of that land was in Sub-Saharan Africa (Deininger and Byerlee 2010). The number has grown rapidly since then, although reports vary as to the actual amount. A number of organizations, such as GRAIN, Via Campesina, Slow Food, Share the World's Resources, have exposed the privatization of farmland at the expense of small farmers, peasants, sustainable farming, etc. In 2011, an International Alliance Against Land Grabbing formed, and the issue was prominent on the agenda at the 2011 World Social Forum. Discussions within the Via Campesina and wider WSF networks within the subsystem have expanded understandings among activists of how the land grabbing trend is linked to the global economy and how it affects the poorest people in different parts of the world.

¹⁶ <http://www.usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/about>

The UN, on the other hand, has offered conflicting guidance on the practice, due to the contradictions inherent in the organization's structure and its compartmentalized approach to global problems. On the one hand, a 2009 UN report issued by the FAO along with the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development and the nongovernmental International Institute for Environment and Development argued that there are, or at least could be, benefits for the owners and workers of these lands being bought.¹⁷ The argument is that the agricultural sector was stagnant from lack of capital flow, so this influx of capital could actually be beneficial and help development. On the other hand, even as early as 2008, the UN special rapporteur on the right to food was urging caution in this area, and had begun to develop a voluntary code of conduct to guide talks on more formal regulations on international land purchases (Hornby 2011; UN News Centre 2009).¹⁸

This tension within the UN reflects the basic contradictions between the economic logic of globalized capitalism and the modern world-system's geoculture, which have been increasingly institutionalized in the Charter of the United Nations, international treaties, and in the world polity more generally (see, e.g., Boli and Thomas 1997; Frank et al. 2000). Although the United Nations is based on the principle of legal sovereignty of member-states and is structured in ways that ensure continued U.S. hegemony in the capitalist world-economy, UN agencies are charged with contradictory tasks of defending and institutionalizing international human rights norms, of which the right to life (and by extension food and water) is paramount. Such norms that both reinforce states' identities –i.e., by defining the criteria by which states win recognition and respect from other states-- but they also challenge territorial sovereignty and state autonomy (see Cronin 2002). Expanding transnational norms and ideas also have increased the role of “information politics” in international affairs (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999; Sikkink 2011), thereby empowering actors who rely on their discursive or persuasive power. Movements gain leverage by pointing to contradictions in the logic of the dominant order, thereby challenging the legitimacy of both states and larger capitalist system. As they question the value of money versus a good life, hold out the idea that human solidarity may be preferable to nationalism, and stress humans' inescapable connection to the planet, these

¹⁷ “Land Grab or Development Opportunity?: Agricultural Investment and International Land Deals in Africa” At: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/ak241e/ak241e00.htm>.

¹⁸ Talks on a formal agreement to regulate land grabbing are continuing under the UN's Committee on Food Security (Hornby 2011).

many movements acting together and separately are helping build a system of world politics that is grounded in fundamentally different principles from the existing one.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we've argued that in the course of struggle, transnational social movements have engaged with and altered the inter-state system in important ways. By activating latent or submerged conflicts in the inter-state arena, such as in the cases of climate change and food sovereignty, they highlight contradictions between the geoculture's normative and legitimating elements, undermining the legitimacy of the dominant order. By challenging state-defined discourses around climate and food—and in particular by challenging capitalist market logics--activists have helped strengthen the salience and resonance of alternative norms and ideas among social movement networks and in larger the world-system. Finally, by developing organizations, collective identities, and practices to advance an alternative global project, social movements are creating and legitimating alternative practices that both define and can help realize an alternative system of world politics. As people come together in organized ways outside their national contexts, the transnational identities and norms they develop have helped make more explicit and blatant the contradictions between the norms and practices of the modern world-system. This has enhanced the antisystemic potential of social movements at a time when globalized capitalism is in unprecedented crisis.

Further work in this area will examine how networks among transnational actors have shifted over time, as well as whether and how these networks represent or support an alternative subsystem of world politics. We hypothesize that networks among social movement actors—i.e., among TSMOs and between TSMOs and other international nongovernmental actors as well as among national and sub-national social movement organizations have become stronger over the past ten years. In particular, we expect these networks to be strongest in regions that have experienced the greatest level of transnational contention over, e.g., trade agreements and the global economy. We also expect to see a shift in the density of networks between TSMOs and the inter-state arena as well as declining centrality of groups tied to inter-governmental organizations within TSMO networks. Our ongoing research will explore the changes in transnational networks to test these hypotheses and compile qualitative evidence on cases--such

as those discussed above--which illustrate the implications of this emergent, antisystemic arena of world politics.

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Table 1:
Social Movements, States, and the Inter-State System in Historical Perspective

1700s- 1800s: Social Movements → State Formation & Democratization

Transnational diffusion

Late 1800s: Early transnational networking and struggle

Identities and values vs. territorial boundaries

Anti-slavery movement

Socialist International & worker struggles

Anti-war/pacifist struggles (anti-statist)

Feminism

Liberal internationalism

Early Post-WWII: Altruism and Interdependence

Transnational organizational 'revolution' parallels post-war consolidation of inter-state arena (1960s-70s)

National independence movements

Third world solidarity networks

Human rights

1970s-90s: Multilateralism in UN Framework

Leveraging international normative structures vs. global power-politics & economy

'Boomerang' strategy

UN Global conferences → >>transnational organizing

IMF/World Bank protests expand

IMF-riots in global South

Late 1990s-2000s

Heightened institutional contradictions

Increased militarism vs. inter-state projects

Increase in transnational autonomous spaces

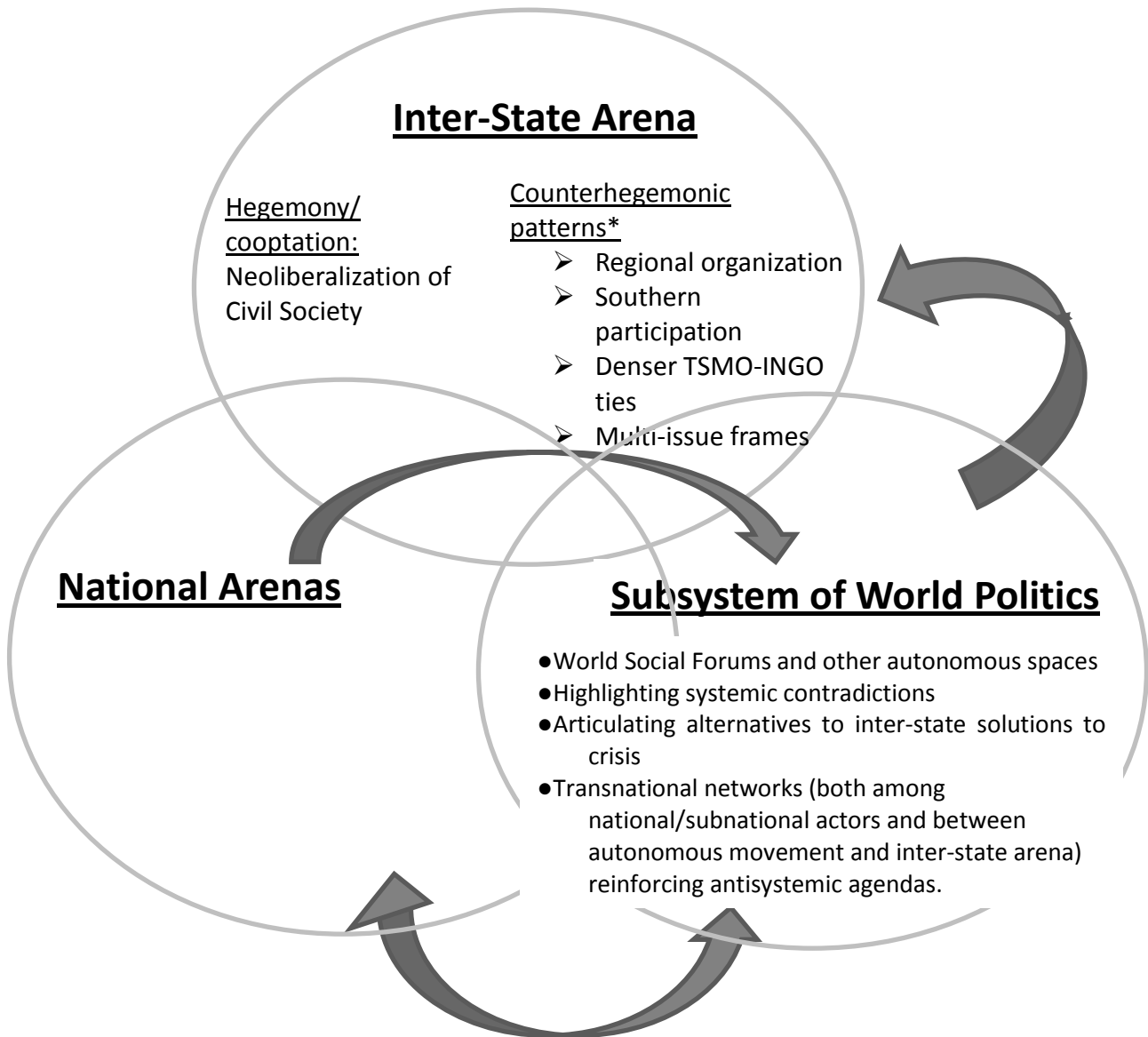
Disappointment & distancing from UN framework

Greater focus on global economy & institutions

World Social Forums & other autonomous spaces

Adapted from Smith (2008).

Figure 1: The Emerging Subsystem of World Politics



*Patterns documented by Smith and Wiest in *Social Movements in the World-System* (2012).