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STRATEGIES FOR DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE NONTERRITORIAL CONTINENT

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Alfaz del Pi, April 1980

1. Introduction.

The naiveté of the person who tries to understand the world system in terms of the Westphalia system alone, the system of states and their interrelations alone, has been obvious for a long time, except, of course, to the naive. The convenience of subdividing a finite earth into countries, equipping them with grosso modo similar states as central organizations (a process wrongly called nation-building) with governments and the usual key figures (the head of state, the head of government) is obvious. In the nation-state it constitutes an answer - often disastrous in its consequences - to a human inclination for people with shared ethnicity (a nation) to want to live together, keeping others outside. Conceptually it is simple because it refers to a finite, well-defined space, territorial space. In a sense it belongs, as a social formation, to the infancy of world organization although historically it came after much more complex forms, eg nomadic organizations with their much higher level of mobility and, consequently, adaptability to nature.

So, what else is there in the world if the system of states does not exhaust it ?

In this context no effort will be made to do this exercise, often done, once more in a very systematic fashion. Suffice it only to say that there seem to be two great organizing principles for human beings : by vicinity (or territoriality) and by affinity (or non-territoriality). The former is simple, clear, obvious and hence in a sense more primitive, more primordial, which does not mean that it is a stage or phase ever to be left behind. Unaided by technology human beings are slow at moving, which means that the neighborhood principle in geographical space will remain as a valid basis for human organization - unless we should acquire better wings than those provided by airplanes and better means of telepathy etc than those provided by the PTT - including the electronic mail now just around the corner.

The experience is that humans seek other forms of association - affinities are found over and above the familiarity derived from vicinity - a familiarity known sometimes to breed contempt possibly because it comes about with insufficient maturity of reflection - simply because they are there ("they" being persons or states). The basis may be similarity (eg nations not assembled in one country under one state headed by one government - the standard formula), shared values in spite of dissimilarities, shared interests, even in spite of dissimilarities and different values. Obviously, if these three criteria should coincide (as for the Jews) the net result is a very forceful type of affinity. All of this points to various types of associations, but then there is also the organization - such

as a factory, a firm (company) where people are linked through interaction, presumably producing goods and services (sometimes also bads and disservices).

The second dimension in this connection would have something to do with level of social organization. The most basic social unit, of course, is the individual; to integrate one individual into a person is already a task only successfully completed in a minute fraction of humanity. But if we disregard the level of the individual there is the traditional distinction between groups or systems of affinity at the subnational, national and transnational levels - in other words, groups that draw their members from a distinct group within the nation (here actually meaning country), from the country as a whole, or from different countries. A city or an ethnic group within a country would be examples of the first, a national trade-union organization or the second, a transnational corporation (TNC) of the third.

However, this distinction in terms of levels is rapidly losing in significance. A typical phenomenon of our times is that all such units tend to link up with each other, but not necessarily in the form of a new "actor", meaning a clearly constituted entity that acts in and on the world system. There is something in-between the set of cities and, say, a world or continental federation or association of cities : the network of cities, interacting, conditioning each other, at times perhaps even becoming another actor, then lapsing back to something more close to the totally unstructured set.

In other words, there is a general but very complex tendency towards transnationalization. Anything tends today to link up with something somewhere else. Most important : that something somewhere else does not have to be of the same category. It can be totally different : an Indian "tribe" in the US can tie up with OPEC, for instance, thus constituting a link between what traditionally would be the subnational and the transnational. This lack of conventional intellectual and political orderliness is here seen as a characteristic of today's world and as something that has to be taken into account in any effort to come to grips with the world system.

What this leads to is in the first run a simple typology of the components of the world system :

	Vicinity or territorial	Affinity or non-territorial
<u>Transnational</u> or global level	(United Nations)	(TNCs)
<u>National</u> level	(Westphalia system)	(national trade unions)
<u>Subnational</u> or local level	(cities, ethnics)	(Kinship groups)

The basic dichotomy in this scheme, for the present purpose, is not vicinity/affinity, but the Westphalia system as against all the rest. In parentheses we have given some examples of what can be found in these other categories.

But then, elaborating on this, we arrive at a second level where the phenomenon of transnationalization is taken into account in a more advanced way. At this level all of the above start relating to all of the above (giving 36 categories or 72 if we count both affinity and vicinity possibilities). In so doing they do not respect borders between countries (or between counties for that matter). The relation is not only one of similarity (there are cities or members of the Tang clan on the other side of the border), but one of linkage. At the simplest level one would talk of networks - and then proceed through all kinds of intermediate levels towards the fullblown transnational actor. The only thing that that can prevent this from happening in today's world would be some kind of territorial repression; a government so jealous of linkages transcending the border that actors remain subnational or national.

Thinking, not to mention acting, in terms such as these lead to an astounding variety of actors in the world system, all of them "transnational" with the only exception of the linkages between local levels within the same country. Just think of the double embassy occupation referred to as the "Iran hostage crisis", linking three countries (Iran, the US, England), a group of Iranian militants certainly not identical with the government, a minority in Iran, possibly expressing itself thorough militants in London. The tragic outcomes of the efforts to squeeze all of this into Westphalia system type models will be with us for a long time to come.

James Rosenau, in a recent paper gives these four examples of "recent events reported in the Los Angeles press" :

The Navahos and 21 other Western Indian tribes enter into discussions with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in an effort to get advice on the development of energy resources.

President Sadat of Egypt consults with Jesse Jackson, a private American citizen on a five-nation trip to bring peace to the Middle East.

The University of Southern California and the government of Bahrein sign a contract in which the former agrees to provide the intellectual resources needed by the latter.

Ministers of the Quebec separatist government undertake a series of tours of California in an effort to gain understanding and build support for their independence movement.

And he adds : "How does one analyze such transnational development ? In what niches of the post-realist, differentiated, and multipolar state model can they be placed ? The answer strikes me as obvious as it is distressing : such events have no home in our current formulations". With this one may certainly agree, only it is not quite so novel as a phenomenon as Rosenau seems to indicate from his examples. Rather, it may be that our effort to capture something easily conceptualized and administered has led to an overemphasis on the international association, particularly those with national chapters, at the expense of more complicated and more fluid phenomena in the world system. Maybe a clear example of how people's inventiveness is far ahead of the social scientists trying to come to grips with what happens!

2. The problem of democratization.

The problem to be discussed now is the general problem of democratization of this extremely complex web of actors and entities of all kinds. Of course, much of their political effort can be seen as directed towards and partly against the state-system, as an effort, for instance, to influence and democratize that system. But the concern here is rather with these entities themselves. What are the possibilities, what can be done ?

Some words first about the meaning of the concept of "democratization". Generally speaking there seem to be two trends in the definition of this concept, both of them with less shallow undercurrents. Thus, there is the famous definition in terms of rights to participate in decisions concerning oneself, and the institutionalization of this right in terms of free elections of representatives to a parliament. The critic would point out that only the national level is involved. But the system can then be repeated as is often done at the local (in this case municipal) level, but so far not at the global level. And it can be repeated in the organizations and associations, i.e. in all the affinity or non-territorial "components".

Second, democracy has something to do with social justice and to some extent with equality. Thus, the "one person, one vote" principle is probably the most dramatic formulation of equality ever heard, much more so than "same income to everybody". But whatever entitlement here is the basic point about this interpretation of democracy (not etymologically derived) is that it should be available to all citizens without distinction of race, creed, sex or similar ascriptive criteria. The welfare state has its origin in such reflections.

The undercurrents are equally well known. The basic critique of the first concept would be that this is not participation in decision-making but merely delegation (to members of the elected body, sometimes not even to that) - that the only meaning of democracy is direct democracy. And the basic critique of the second concept would be that it is distributive, not structural: it tries to solve problems of inequality by a more equal distribution, not by attacking those structural components that generate the inequality. In short, it is inequality directed, not inequity directed. Moreover, those on top will select what to distribute and which dimensions to take into account when social justice is to be exercised. Thus, it is only very recently that sex has become a dimension for distribution, and only after considerable fight - age has not yet really entered the picture. Race has, and ethnicity (needless to say, after some fighting!) - but what about class? "Distribution regardless of class" is a contradictio in adjecto in a class society, except for a minor bundle of goods and services.

The first critique may lead to anarchist conclusions about maximum size (for direct democracy to be viable); the second critique about class formation to socialist conclusions about collective ownership of means of production, or, in a less limiting formula, to more horizontal ways of dividing labor. Both of them together would tend to foster thinking and practice in terms of small basic social units, building democracy with such units as building blocs for instance by tying them together in federal structures. It is relatively easily seen what this means in the territorial systems of vicinity. But what does it all mean, all this about democratization, in the non-territorial systems of affinity?

Let it first be pointed out that the very existence of two different organizing principles for human beings in itself is of profound importance for the whole theory and practice of democracy. It cuts both ways: one system may compensate for the injustices of the other; but it may certainly also reinforce them. Just think of what trade unions (national, affinity) have meant in order to provide a (at least potentially) democratic setting to workers deprived of voting rights in the country for which they toiled! On the other hand, we also know how international associations tend to be run by privileged persons from privileged countries, meaning a strengthening of privileges that may be converted into anti-democratic structures, in any sense of that word.

Hence, the first line answer to the problem of how to democratize is very conventional: democratize each transnational component, by participation in decision-making and distribution of whatever goods and services, or "privileges"

that any particular component may have to offer. There are three implications of this, and they should be spelt out in some details: reduction of size, rotation of office, and the decoupling-recoupling scenario.

Reduction in size. We have mentioned above limited size as a condition of direct democracy, without arguing in detail, nor spelling out what a reduced size may mean. Let us just say that it means, roughly speaking, the opportunity of everybody to interact with everybody else in that component or unit; how many this would imply in precise terms then becomes a question of interaction capacity. (it should be noted that it says "opportunity", not necessarily that everybody makes use of that opportunity at all times). There is a "small is beautiful" movement under way in many countries, often phrased in terms of decentralization (as opposed of delegation of some central authority to the local level) and even local self-reliance. That movement will reach the non-territorial association very soon in full, it is already lapping on the fringes of that "continent". Thus, the international scientific associations have now become so big that they cease being attractive simply because scientific dialogue is impossible in setting of that size. Interestingly enough they tend to break up into smaller sections and sub-sections with each section having an independent life, using the big association and meetings as umbrellas under which to gather. The big association becomes, in fact, a federation of the smaller ones, each of them transnational, as the big association used to conceive of itself as a federation of national "chapters" - itself evidently being the book of which these chapters were a part. This type of development is probably something to be welcomed, as process healthy for the same reason as the splitting into working groups in a conference with too many participants to permit direct interaction and articulation by everybody is healthy. And it is interesting to see the enormous richness of small transnational grouping now growing up - as in the Rosenau list above - deliberately staying small.

Rotation of office. It is a trivial point, but it does mean that officers are elected for a limited period, that there are some rules against re-election, and that in addition to this the office, not only the officers, rotates so as to be exposed to, and have a feed-back into new contexts. It should be noted that this is not the same as the practice aimed at in the UN system, that of distributing headquarters more evenly among regions (a total failure so far), but of shifting the office from one place to the other. The general model has been that of one of the oldest international associations, the Catholic church, with its (apparently) rather permanent headquarters. And the fixation of the head office in geographical space has been correlated with a certain fixation of the head officers in social space; all of it, in turn, linked to the predominance of the Northwestern corner of the world until

recently. Rotation is so important for democracy in the sense of distribution of privilege that it probably should be undertaken even if it is against democracy in the sense of majority will.

The decoupling-recoupling scenario. When the fixations to certain niches in geographical and social space become too permanent, too rigid, too entrenched the only viable strategy if one wants to promote democratization would be a rupture of the association. What this means in practice is simple : underprivileged countries withdraw, forming their own associations, underprivileged people withdraw forming their own associations. There is, of course, the problem of resources : both third world countries, and women, have prove themselves capable of mobilizing resources after such ruptures partly because the rupture itself has a mobilizing effect. (This does point to the importance, however, of making travel cheaply available, and of decreasing the rates of telecommunication as much as has been the case for computers - particularly as they depend on some of the same technology.

If an association consistently refuses to deal with issues from a third world, woman or other marginalized groups points of view then to break out and form their own association is the obvious strategy, whether that group is in majority or not. One of the beauties of the non-territorial continent is exactly the ease with which this can be done, associational secession being considerably easier than territorial secession. Whether it is always wise strategy is another matter. It may be argued that more is gained by fighting it out; the threat of rupture being one obvious weapon in such a fight. On the other hand, to keep a group with democratic rights unsatisfied within an organization on vague promises just to keep them inside and in order to avoid the humiliation of a split and a secession is also an obvious strategy of domination. After a reasonable waiting period decoupling would therefore be the best way out, always keeping the possibility of recoupling open for the future.

What this all amounts to is a more democratic process of transnationalization than we have so far witnessed, and probably at an explosive rate once it really gets off the ground. It means, more particularly, a decrease in the years to come in the North-Western share of the offices and officers; not because all offices will be transferred to the Third world where the majority of humankind lives, but because they will become more like the artificial satellites, orbiting the earth, of course with a limited life span.

All of this actually gives rise to one interesting reflection: how onesided much of the analysis of transnational actors in general and transnational associations in particular in the last decade has been. The gist of the analysis has been to show that these are vehicles of dominance by the North-western corner over the rest of the world, undoubtedly true, but this is only one side of the story. It is often forgotten that wherever there is interaction there is a two-way dependency, and that this is true also when the interaction pattern is set up in such a way that one party dominated the other. Transnational corporations have been used as a way of exercising influence in periphery countries. But the corporations also depend on these countries in order to operate. Hence, when the periphery becomes conscious and mobilized enough to confront the corporations, simply saying "look, you will no longer be permitted to operate on our territory unless you satisfy conditions X, Y, Z--", the conditions in fact meaning a transfer of power towards the periphery, then it becomes clear that power is always a two-way thing. Exercise of dominance always presupposes some element of cooperation by the dominated. Hence, the highly undemocratic transnational components spun around the world in the world system may become a medium unfortunately not only for democratization, but also of the emergence of new power centers, new patterns of dominance.

All of this, then, gives rise to a considerably more difficult problem if the question is how to democratize the non-territorial continent. The problem is well known from the territorial or Westphalia system and hinted at above; the world may witness the most beautiful democratic set-ups at the national level and down to the smallest local levels, yet the global level may be totally undemocratic, run - for instance - by two power-greedy superpowers. The non-territorial continent also has actors with power considerably disproportionate to the power of others. Thus, the problem with a superpower is not that it has power resources incommensurate with their size, value, input to the total system or whatever, but that they have a type of power keeping much of the world population at ransom (because of the strategies underlying the nuclear weapons), and that it has power incommensurate with everybody else. And the same is the case with some of the nonterritorial groups, for instance the illegitimate ones known as "terrorists". Without having to use them as an example, however, the same point can be arrived at with reference to international pilots associations, PTT associations, etc.; groupings that have it in their power to paralyze much of the transnational system. The answer to that problem, of course, is not to increase the penalties on them for a strike (and pay them ever more handsomely for not going to strike), but to make them less indispensable by having alternative fall-back systems. A strike of garbage workers becomes a less impressive tool if the citizens decide to take care of the garbage disposal them-

selves or (an even better solution) producing less garbage.

In this connection it is interesting to see what has happened to diplomacy. A strike among diplomats all over the world would be difficult to bring about as some of them are supposed to have opposite interests. But if it came about would hardly impress anybody as their information function is usually covered by journalists; researches etc., their negotiation function by direct ministerial talks over the telephone or meetings in multilateral settings and their representation function by ethnic restaurants, transnational associations/corporations etc. What remains is their status and some less palatable functions, such as espionage and subversion. Today diplomats are paying the price of the contradiction between their high public status, their relative dispensability for traditional functions and their use as cover for less conventional functions: the price is known as "diplo-napping". Through their high status governments are supposed to be touched, but governments also hit back to protect their own (in addition, in the foreign ministries are colleagues and friends of diplomats kidnapped, protecting them as best they can). The outcome of this power play in the longer run remains to be seen.

The non-territorial continent has great resilience, and in this lies exactly one of the answer to this very tricky problem: make no actor indispensable, always have another channel, another linkage system, another actor if one of them is gambling on indispensability to gain power over others. This is of course equally valid subnationally, and as a principle it militates against monopolization, including the monopolization by professions, including such professions as trade unions. It points in the direction of a world with a much higher level of self-reliance at least where the production of satisfiers for basic needs is concerned, and in the direction of a much more pluralistic world where all kinds of functions are concerned.

A. Conclusion.

We are moving into a new kind of world, further and further removed from the Westphalia system. In fact, what we witness today is probably even a dismantling of the nation-state in many corners of the world, considering the enormous volume of migration in recent years - brain drain, body drain, refugees for economic and/or political reasons, etc. What does it all mean, what kinds of new ties are being spun around the world? With nations, clans, families scattered all over? We shall see - and to start with maybe we shall have to reconceptualize quite a lot and also rethink our democratic theory.
