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**Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and  
the Parallel 'People's Summits': Theorizing the  
Political  
and Democracy in International Theory**

par  
Marc G. Doucet

Thèse de doctorat déposée à  
la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales  
en vue de l'obtention du doctorat en science politique

Directrice: Claire Turenne Sjolander

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**Thesis:** “Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Parallel ‘People’s Summits’: Theorizing the Political and Democracy in International Theory. ”, **Marc G. Doucet**

**Abstract:** Since 1993, only four years after its inaugural meeting, and the same year of its first meeting of heads of state in Seattle, Washington, the international economic organization known as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has been the site of opposition headed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These NGOs are concerned with issues such as human rights, gender, labour rights, migrant rights, democracy, and the environment. Almost every year the scope and sophistication of the opposition has grown. In order to account for this opposition, the thesis develops an alternative interdisciplinary perspective through the work of authors such as Claude Lefort, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Jacques Derrida, and William Connolly. The thesis argues that APEC represents more than merely the outcome of interstate relations and/or economic globalization. Rather, its discourse contains representations of identity which obscure difference. This political move of APEC’s discourse creates an antagonism to which respond the parallel NGO forums. In responding to this antagonism the NGO discourse opens the possibility for a deterritorialization of democracy. In order to envision this deterritorialization the thesis further argues that one must appropriate the theoretical vantage point of a model of ‘agonistic democratic politics’.

## **Acronyms**

APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC)  
Asia Pacific Labour Network (APLN)  
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)  
Asian Development Bank (ADB)  
Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization (EVSL)  
East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC)  
Economic and Technical Cooperation (ECOTECH)  
Eminent Persons Group (EPG)  
European Union (EU)  
Food, Energy, Environment, Economic Growth, Population Initiative (FEEEP)  
General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)  
Information Technology Agreement (ITA)  
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)  
International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
Market-Oriented Sector-Selective talks (MOSS)  
Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)  
Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)  
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)  
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)  
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)  
Orderly Marketing Agreements (OMAs)  
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)  
Pacific Business Forum (PBF)  
Pacific-Economic Cooperation Council (PECC)  
Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs)  
Prime Minister's Office (PMO)  
Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)  
Structural Impediments Initiative (SII)  
Voluntary Import Expansion (VIE)  
Voluntary Export Restraints (VERs)  
World Trade Organization (WTO)

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## Chapter One

# Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Parallel 'People's Summits': Theorizing the Political and Democracy in International Theory

[...] make APEC's agenda the world's agenda.<sup>1</sup>

APEC has a customer. APEC is not for governments; it is for business. Through APEC, we aim to get government out of the way, opening the way for business to do business.<sup>2</sup>

APEC means business.<sup>3</sup>

Since leadership out of this mess does not seem to be coming from the traditional places anymore- not from politicians, political parties, the church or academia- it is up to us- working people, the unemployed, young people, old people, people of colour, first nations people- to take up the mantle. We are going to have to form the citizen movements in our countries and across borders to take back democracy in their absence.<sup>4</sup>

### *Introduction*

Since 1993, only four years after its inaugural meeting, and the same year of its first

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<sup>1</sup> Statement made by President Bill Clinton of the United States at the 'APEC CEO Summit', Auckland New Zealand, September 12, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Statement made by Joan Spero, US Undersecretary for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs before the Subcommittees on Asia and Pacific Affairs and International Economic Policy and Trade, International Relations Committee, House of Representatives, US Congress, 18 July 1995. Reproduced in *Challenging the Mainstream: APEC and the Asia-Pacific Development Debate*, eds. Ed Tadem and Lakshmi Daniel (Hong Kong: ARENA, Asia Alliance of YMCA's, Christian Conference for Asia and Documentation for Action Groups in Asia, 1995), 190.

<sup>3</sup> This is the title for a number of reports prepared by APEC's Business Advisory Council (ABAC) which was created in 1995. 'APEC means business' became a theme for APEC after the meeting in Osaka in 1995 which was seen as not sufficiently relevant or friendly to business.

<sup>4</sup> Maude Barlow, 'For the Opening of the People's Summit', Opening speech for the 1997 People's Summit on APEC, Vancouver, Canada, November 20, 1997. Reproduced in People's Summit Secretariat, *The 1997 People's Summit on APEC: Proceedings* (Vancouver: People's Summit Secretariat, undated), 13.

meeting of heads of state in Seattle, Washington, the international economic organization known as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)<sup>5</sup> has been the site of opposition arranged by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These NGOs are concerned with issues such as human rights, gender, labour rights, migrant rights, democracy, sustainable development, and the environment. In whichever member country of APEC the heads of state have met, NGOs have organized parallel forums or 'People's Summits', and every year the scope and sophistication of the opposition has grown.<sup>6</sup> Why would APEC provoke such organized protest on such a broad range of issues and with such regularity? Perhaps it is because of what APEC, as a component of economic 'global governance'<sup>7</sup> has sought to accomplish in the areas of trade and investment liberalization and economic and technical cooperation, two of its main pillars. After all, APEC does have an ambitious agenda which could be cause for opposition among various NGOs concerned with social issues.

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<sup>5</sup> The founding member countries of APEC are Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States. China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong were admitted in 1991. Mexico and Papua New Guinea became members in 1993. Chile was admitted in 1994, and Peru, Russia, and Vietnam were given member status in 1998.

<sup>6</sup> The two exceptions are 1994 and 1999. In 1994, attempts by NGOs to organize a conference in Indonesia where APEC heads of state were meeting in Bogor were obstructed by the Indonesia government and the military. In November 1999, when APEC heads of state were meeting in New Zealand, local NGOs decided not to organize a large scale international NGO forum even though in the end a small conference did take place. The lead New Zealand NGO, the Aotearoa/ New Zealand APEC Monitoring Group, decided to concentrate its efforts on a year long anti-APEC information campaign rather than organize a large scale international conference similar to the parallel NGO forums held in previous years. It was felt by the leaders of this NGO that the parallel NGO forums on APEC had developed into a large bureaucratic event and was no longer concentrating on 'action-oriented, strategy -focused' opposition. See the Aotearoa/ New Zealand APEC Monitoring Group's web site. - <http://www.apec.gen.nz/> -. In particular see the articles by Aziz Choudry, 'Another Year, Another Summit?', part I (1997), and part II (1998) and Aziz Choudry, 'Leather Jackets and Liar's Scrawl- APEC', *The Big Picture*, no. 13 (February, 1998) also reproduced on the web site. What the events in New Zealand mean for the broader opposition to APEC will be explored in Chapter Five.

<sup>7</sup> 'Global governance' is understood to mean what Robert Cox has called '*la nébuleuse*'. With this term, Cox seeks to capture the idea that the sum of international economic organizations constitute a relatively obscure supra-national political structure which conditions and sets the parameters for national economic policy choices. Robert W. Cox, 'Global *Perestroika*' in *New World Order? Socialist Register 1992*, eds. Ralph Miliband and Leo Panitch (London: Merlin Press, 1992), 27.

APEC members did announce their intention to complete negotiations to create a “free and open trade and investment”<sup>8</sup> area by the year 2010 for the developed members and 2020 for the ‘not so developed members’.<sup>9</sup> The significance of this, we are told, lies in the fact that APEC encompasses 42 percent of the global trade with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of over 16 trillion U.S. dollars.<sup>10</sup> Since announcing the free trade and investment agenda in Bogor, Indonesia in 1994, APEC has gone on to develop an Action Agenda (Osaka 1995) and an Action Plan (Manila 1996) with each member providing its own Individual Action Plans for trade and investment liberalization which have been revised on a regular basis. Worried about criticism that APEC was no more than a ‘talk shop’, members identified 15 sectors in 1997 for “early voluntary sectoral liberalization” (EVSL) which were intended to be concrete ‘deliverables’ gradually moving towards the objective of trade and investment liberalization. In 1994, APEC also formulated ‘non-binding investment principles’ which are broadly similar to those found in the failed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). Aside from the effort to create a free trade and investment area, APEC’s second pillar encompasses a very broad range of issues which deal with cooperation on economic and technical matters. This second pillar is made up of eleven Working Groups and numerous committees<sup>11</sup> as well as an

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<sup>8</sup> The actual wording was slightly more ambiguous. The Bogor Leaders’ Declaration states: “We further agree to *announce our commitment to complete the achievement of our goal* [emphasis added] of free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific no later than the year 2020.” See APEC, ‘Leaders’ Declaration-Bogor’ (Singapore: APEC secretariat, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> To date, there has been no formal acknowledgment of who are the members of each group of countries.

<sup>10</sup> 1998 figures taken from APEC’s web site May 5, 2000. - <http://www.apecsec.org.sg/> -.

<sup>11</sup> The Working Groups are: Energy, Fisheries, Human Resources Development, Industrial Science and Technology, Marine Resources Conservation, Telecommunications, Trade Promotion, Transportation, Tourism, Agricultural Technical Cooperation Experts Group, and Ad-hoc Policy Level Group on Small and Medium Enterprises. As for the committees they include: Budget and Management Committee, Sub-committee on ECOTECH, Committee on Trade and Investment, and Economic Committee.

average of 250 to 300 different Economic and Technical Cooperation projects, known as ECOTECH projects, in six priority areas identified in 1996.<sup>12</sup> The work that falls under the heading of APEC's second pillar normally deals with research and exchange of information on a host of subjects broadly related to trade, investment, and other matters of international economic relations. Most often led by an individual or a group of APEC member governments, these projects are largely based on voluntary participation. Outside of APEC's own agenda, the organization is also seen as being an important platform from which support for other international agreements is solidified. Indeed, APEC's role as a regional support mechanism for economic multilateralism has been central to APEC's formal declarations and has underwritten most of the literature which assesses APEC through the concept of 'open regionalism' and 'regime theory'.<sup>13</sup> In 1996 for example, APEC members came out in support of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) which sought to reduce tariffs on information technologies. This support is often seen as a crucial step in gaining the momentum that was needed to get the agreement finalized within the World Trade Organization (WTO), its principal negotiating body.

Do APEC's first and second pillars and the role they play as a support mechanism

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<sup>12</sup> The six areas are: developing human capital, fostering safe and efficient capital markets, strengthening economic infrastructure, harnessing technologies for the future, promoting environmentally sustainable development, encouraging the growth of small and medium enterprises.

<sup>13</sup> The ministerial level declarations and the leaders' declarations which are released annually at the end of APEC's meetings consistently reiterate the commitment that APEC members have to strengthening the open multilateral trading system. Indeed, as we will see in Chapter Three, support for economic multilateralism has been part of APEC's foundational narrative of economic cooperation. See for instance the inaugural declaration APEC, 'Joint Statement: First Ministerial Meeting, Canberra, Australia, November 6-7' (Singapore: APEC Secretariat, 1989). For those who have addressed the notion of 'open regionalism' within academic literature see in particular Ross Garnaut, *Open Regionalism and Trade Liberalization: An Asia-Pacific Contribution to the World Trade System* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1996). On 'regime theory' and the multilateral free trade regime see the most recent collection *Asia-Pacific Crossroads: Regime Creation and the Future of APEC*, eds. Vinod K. Aggarwal and Charles E. Morrison (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998). This academic literature will also be examined in Chapter Three.

for economic multilateralism constitute the reason for the organized opposition? The short answer is no. APEC's attempts to create a 'free and open trade and investment' area have to date largely failed. In part, this failure stems from the fact that all the negotiations are framed by the founding APEC principles of 'consensus' and 'voluntarism'.<sup>14</sup> Of the sectors identified for EVSL in 1997, all were forwarded for negotiations at the WTO.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the commitments towards trade and investment liberalization made by APEC governments are often part of prior commitments made elsewhere and are merely restated within APEC. Furthermore, since the Bogor initiative, negotiations on trade and investment liberalization have tended to be paralyzed by a U.S./ Japanese stalemate. Finally, the financial crisis in 1997 has severely undermined attempts to create an Asia-Pacific free trade and investment area. In this respect, it would be rather difficult to argue that APEC is on par with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the European Union (EU) or the aborted MAI. Unlike these components of global governance, APEC has nothing resembling 'legally binding agreements' and no substantial means of enforcing any element of its agenda. Although it has developed investment principles similar to those of the MAI, they are non-binding and depend on voluntary implementation, as do all of APEC's proposals. So, despite the fact that NGOs often cite the 'open and free trade and investment area' agenda as one of the primary reasons for fearing and opposing APEC, it does not explain adequately the reason for the opposition in itself. As for APEC's second pillar, the bulk of issues and projects of economic and technical

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<sup>14</sup> As inscribed in the 1991 'Seoul APEC Declaration'.

<sup>15</sup> See the section 'About APEC' on APEC's web site, May 5, 2000. - <http://www.apecsec.org.sg/> -.

cooperation, albeit wide ranging and sometimes quite disturbing,<sup>16</sup> remain largely unknown to most of the NGO community. These are highly specific projects which vary over time and are mostly concerned with technical information. With respect to APEC's role as a regional support mechanism for multilateralism, it is true that since its inception some of APEC's members have used the organization as a platform from which is voiced the support for the international liberal trading regime embodied in the WTO, and when its predecessor encountered difficulties in the early 1990s, APEC's support was often seen as a key component of pushing negotiations towards their end.<sup>17</sup> However, in reality that support has always been somewhat mixed. If one comes back to the case of the ITA mentioned earlier, out of the 18 countries who were members of APEC at the time, only nine actually signed the agreement as it was presented at the WTO. Thus, even though APEC as an organization supported the ITA, members like the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Chile were not among the 28 countries who signed the agreement at Singapore's WTO ministerial meeting in December of 1996.<sup>18</sup>

As such, when one looks at APEC, it could be argued that it does not have the same

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<sup>16</sup> One notable example is the 'concept paper' on education prepared by the South Korean Ministry of Labour in May 1997. Written under the 'human resources and development' component of APEC, the paper outlines in dramatic form what is to be the role of education within the context of globalization. As Larry Kuhn has highlighted, the concept paper envisions a role for education which is subservient to the needs of business going so far as to recommend that industry "take part in the curriculum development pertinent to their industry to make the curriculum realistic to the needs of the industry." Quoted in Larry Kuhn, 'Schools for Globalized Business: The APEC Agenda for Education' (paper distributed at the 1997 People's Summit on APEC, Vancouver, Canada, November 1997). The Korean paper did however, remain merely a concept paper.

<sup>17</sup> At the height of APEC's history in 1993, when leaders met for the first time in Seattle, many saw APEC's support of the GATT negotiations as a crucial element in breaking what appeared at the time to be a deadlock between the United States and the European Union. On this argument see in particular William Bodde Jr., *View from the 19<sup>th</sup> Floor: Reflections of the First APEC Executive Director* (Singapore: ASEAN Economic Research Institute and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), 45.

<sup>18</sup> Walden Bello, 'APEC and WTO: The Washington Connection' *Focus on the Global South (FOCUS)*, no. 9 (December 1996/ January 1997). Available online at - <http://focusweb.org/index.html/> -.

kinds of implications for peoples' lives as do other components of global governance which deal with international economic issues. In other words, APEC has not led to the same kind of structural changes for its member countries as one could identify with NAFTA or the EU for instance. As an interstate 'regime' which has sought to deal with trade and investment liberalization, APEC has not moved on to the creation of 'legally binding' agreements nor has its 'consensus building' moved on to any form of substantial implementation of its agenda. Consequently, arguing that NGOs are voicing the concerns of those who have been marginalized by APEC's agenda does not seem to be an adequate explanation. Such an explanation would assume that APEC has had the same kind of structural impact as other interstate economic organizations which have dealt with trade and investment liberalization and economic cooperation. In fact, when one looks at APEC, there does not seem to be much more than 'talk'. APEC is, on this point, very much like its critics have charged: it is nothing more than a 'talk shop', since it has largely been unable to deliver on any substantial element of its stated agenda.<sup>19</sup>

Of course, the pejorative intent in the accusation that APEC is merely a 'talk shop' relies entirely on how one values 'talk'. Viewing APEC as a 'talk shop', or more appropriately for my purposes, as a site of discourse, may be precisely the vantage point from which a reading of the relationship between APEC and the NGO opposition can best be envisioned. To inquire about this relationship from the vantage point of discourse is, this thesis will argue, to inquire about the *political* and *democracy*. To make this argument, we must however, make a distinction between

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<sup>19</sup> This is often either the explicit or implicit assessment of APEC found in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* as well as in *The Economist*. The examples are too numerous to cite. See for instance 'APEC's Family Feud' *The Economist* (November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1998), 41, and Charles Smith, 'The Politics of Economics', *The Far Eastern Economic Review* (June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1994), 48.

*politics and the political.*

A useful starting point to penetrate what politics look like in APEC's discourse is through the relationship the organization has sought foster with the subject position of business.<sup>20</sup> As suggested by two of the opening quotes, one of the dominant features of APEC's discourse has been to draw an equivalence between the subject position of business and the latter's perceived role as the primary economic force whether local, national, regional or global. Contrary to other interstate economic fora such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), APEC places the subject position of business much more overtly at the forefront of its discourse. It does so not only through its organizational structure by giving business its own official advisory body (first through the Pacific Business Forum (PBF) and the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) created in 1993 then replaced by the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) in 1995), but it also increasingly places the subject position of business at the centre of its annual meetings which, much like the financing of the Olympics in recent decades, has been underwritten by corporate sponsorship.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, during the past few years, parallel to the annual APEC leaders' meeting 'APEC CEO Summits' have also been organized giving corporations additional

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<sup>20</sup> The term subject position will be defined in more detail in Chapters Two and Four.

<sup>21</sup> Since 1996 every leaders' meeting has been partly financed by corporations entitling some to be recognized as 'official sponsors'. In Vancouver for instance, corporations were placed into one of five categories depending on the sum of their sponsorship: diamond, platinum, gold, silver, or bronze with diamond sponsors providing contributions of between 300,000 to 500,000 Canadian dollars to finance various APEC activities. Total corporate sponsorship amounted to just under 9 million dollars, approximately 16 percent of the 55 million the Canadian government spent for its year as APEC chair. Corporate sponsorship has fallen since then reaching only 4 million for the 1999 meeting in New Zealand. Whether this decline is due to poor 'fundraising' technics on the part of the New Zealand government or a decline in the international business community's interest is however, difficult to assess. It should also be noted that the commercialization of international organizations is not limited to APEC. For instance, the meeting marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) held in April 1999 was also underwritten by corporate sponsorship with corporate heads paying 250,000 dollars to attend exclusive gatherings with heads of state. See Tim Smart, 'Count Corporate America Among NATO's Staunchest Allies', *Washington Post* (Tuesday, April 13, 1999), E01.

privileged access to heads of state during exclusive side gatherings to APEC's official meetings. In this relationship between APEC and the subject position of business one can identify two significant defining components of what politics mean in APEC's discourse as well as the particular practices this meaning tends to engender. First, politics is seen as an outcome of state mediated practices. APEC after all is an interstate organization. By inference this locates what is understood to be legitimate politics at the level of the state and interstate relations. And second, politics is seen in terms of a functional extension of economic forces thereby allowing for the privileged status of the subject position of business. In this manner, APEC's politics entail (re)deploying that part of the neo-liberal world view that assigns to governments, and by extension politics, the role of facilitators in order for business to drive what is accepted as economic growth, directed by the dictates of globalizing market forces of which business is seen as the primary voice. The flip side of this discourse combines the exigencies of what Robert Cox has called the "internationalization of the state"<sup>22</sup> with elements of the policy prescription found in what some have termed the 'Washington consensus'.<sup>23</sup> This combination constitutes significant features underwriting the rise

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<sup>22</sup> Cox defines the internationalization of the state as "the global process whereby national policies and practices have been adjusted to the exigencies of the world economy of international production." Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 253.

<sup>23</sup> This term is attributed to John Williamson of the Institute for International Economics a conservative Washington based think tank. The term was originally geared towards formulating a prescription for economic policy reform in Latin America as well as other areas of the 'developing world'. Williamson identifies a number of economic policies which he contends command a certain degree of consensus. They are, he argues, "no-longer-political issues" since they are "drawn from that body of robust empirical generalizations that forms the core of economics". The economic policy orientation of the Washington Consensus according to the author includes; fiscal discipline (reducing and maintaining low budget deficits); public expenditure priorities (focussing on essential government services and abandoning large projects); tax reform (reducing and broadening the tax base); financial liberalization (market-determined interest rates); exchange rates (fixing a rate of exchange which allows exports to be competitively priced); trade liberalization; (reduction of tariff and non-tariff measures); foreign direct investment (FDI) (national treatment for FDI); privatization (selling of state enterprises to the private sector); deregulation (limited regulation and no limits to cross border activities); and property rights (a legal system capable of 'securing property rights'). See John Williamson, 'Democracy and the 'Washington Consensus'', *World Development*, 21, no. 8 (1993), 1329-1336. On APEC and the Washington Consensus, see Mark Beeson, 'Reshaping Regional institutions: APEC and the IMF in East Asia', *The Pacific Review*, 12, no. 1

of the 'post-fordist state' (or perhaps more accurately, the 'neo-fordist state'<sup>24</sup>) which has witnessed a significant restructuring of what is understood to be the role of politics in society. Within this context, the meaning of politics found in APEC's discourse and the particular practices it tends to favour mirrors the broader and dominant meaning of politics which has emerged with economic globalization and the post-Cold War era.

Perhaps the starkest representation of politics articulated in APEC's discourse (and where APEC represents something slightly different than other components of global governance) is captured by the use of the term 'member economies' and 'economic leaders'<sup>25</sup> as the formal designation for national governments and heads of state. Originally, the term was used when the 'three Chinas' were admitted in 1991. In order to alleviate concerns with regard to the status and relationship between China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, members would not be called countries or states, and Taiwan would be known as 'Chinese Taipei'. None of APEC's official documents use the term 'nation' or 'state', and APEC has 'meetings' rather than interstate 'summits'. National anthems are not to be sung during APEC meetings, and national flags are not to be displayed.<sup>26</sup> The

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(1999), 1-24.

<sup>24</sup> On a useful distinction between 'post-fordism' and 'neo-fordism' see Danièle Leborgne and Alain Lipietz, 'L'après-fordisme: idées fausses et questions ouvertes', *Problèmes économiques* (no. 2.260, 29 January, 1992), 13-24.

<sup>25</sup> The use of the term 'economic leaders' has had some rather amusing consequences. One notable instance was when the heads of state were arriving for their meeting in Vancouver in 1997. The caption which appeared on local television when the head of state from Brunei disembarked his airplane was 'the Economic Sultan of Brunei'.

<sup>26</sup> On the ins and outs of the diplomatic relations within APEC see, Yoichi Funabashi, *Asia Pacific Fusion: Japan's Role in APEC* (Washington: Institute for International Economics, 1995). See also the 'Policies and Procedures' section at the APEC Secretariat's Internet site. - <http://www.apecsec.org.sg/> - May 5, 2000.

two terms, however, have far deeper implications for politics than their diplomatic origins allow.<sup>27</sup> In formally eschewing the more common language of the politics of interstate relations in favour of what is meant to be a non-political vocabulary, the politics of APEC, at the level of representation, have sought to legitimize a conception of the relationship between politics and economics that is similar to the one that has marked the post-Cold War era. In a sense, one could say that these terms give a figure to the dominant relationship between politics and economics which has emerged in recent decades under the heading of neo-liberalism while doing so from the standpoint of an interstate economic organization. By means of the notoriety and fanfare revolving around its annual showcase event, the economic leaders's meeting, APEC, arguably more than that of any other such fora, has been about being a harbinger for the view of politics which accompanies this figure.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, APEC is well suited for this role. The fact that the host and chair of the leaders's meeting rotates annually has had the effect of guaranteeing a relatively extensive international coverage unlike other such economic organizations which generally guard their secrecy. This organizational structure has meant that APEC has been involved with more than merely negotiating technical issues of international economic relations. In fact, this feature brings APEC much closer to an event like the Olympics, with all its pageantry and its imagery of neatly

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<sup>27</sup> The decision not to display flags for instance came two years prior to the admission of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. See Funabashi, *Asia Pacific Fusion*, 74. In this sense, one can not attribute APEC's particular discourse merely to the uniqueness of diplomatic relations of the Asia-Pacific.

<sup>28</sup> Indeed, APEC has recently assumed this role more openly. Apparently concerned about the success of the NGO forums in raising public concern about its agenda, APEC members initiated a publication series under the theme 'The Impact of Liberalisation: Communicating with APEC Communities'. Jointly managed by the APEC Study Centres Network, a consortium of over 70 study centers throughout APEC countries, and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), the series is a clear propaganda effort couched in the language of academia. See APEC Economic Committee Report, *Communicating with APEC Communities* (Singapore: APEC Study Centres Network and Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, November 1998).

divided political, social and cultural world coming together in the common belief that economic globalization, driven by business, should be the primary concern of politics and interstate relations. Thus, with its periodic international meeting of heads of state APEC has assumed its most significant and substantial role: an international platform or site of discourse from which is offered an image or representation of politics and its relationship to economics in the post-Cold War world of economic globalization. One could say that its annual leaders' meeting functions like a travelling international art show which displays this figure. The images which APEC conveys are those of 'economic leaders' (rather than government leaders) voicing the interests of large corporations (rather than those of their citizens). These images are APEC's substance *if* we are interested in understanding the *political* and why NGOs have organized, on a regular basis, extensive forums to oppose APEC. In other words, if APEC has generated opposition on a regular basis, it is not primarily because the consequences of a successful implementation of its agenda within the Asia-Pacific. Rather, the *primary argument* of this thesis is that the opposition stems from the fact that the politics (re)deployed in APEC's discourse contain a more profound *political* dimension. This deeper significance is well captured by the images or representations of politics conveyed through APEC's particular discourse, e.g., 'member economies' and 'economic leaders'. Limiting ourselves merely to the level of politics would lead us to conclude that APEC has been a failure since, as I indicated earlier, as of yet APEC has largely been unable to mimic its counterparts at least when it comes to producing some form of structural change for its members. But more importantly, limiting ourselves to this level would not allow us to properly apprehend the *political* significance of APEC. It would in fact lead us to obscure, eclipse, or occult the *political* dimension of APEC's discourse, and therefore misunderstand what this thesis views as the level from which stems the opposition

embodied in the NGO forums.

Again, the opening quotes to this chapter help elucidate what I mean by the *political dimension* of APEC's discourse. Stating that 'APEC is not for governments, it is for business. Through APEC, we aim to get government out of the way, opening the way for business to do business' is, of course, to promote the practice of politics which favours the world view of neo-liberalism. This practice of politics privileges the subject position of business and envisions governments as subservient to economic forces. It does so through a particular conception of the relationship between politics and economics. But what is occulted by this statement is how it founds politics as something which continues to be practised by state representatives despite the appearance that 'APEC is for business'. APEC's discourse contributes to founding this practice as *the* practice of politics and thereby establishes a particular national and international terrain for politics and its relation to other spheres of human activity while occulting other possibilities. APEC's discourse, at the level of the *political*, is not merely 'for business' but is also about creating the discursive foundation in which the state and its own imaginary is sustained as the privileged centre for the practice of politics perceived to transcend territorial boundaries (after all, it is governments that are getting governments 'out of the way'). Thus, not only is APEC involved in describing the modern day relationship between politics and economics from the standpoint of the international and its interstate imaginary (what we find at the level of the politics of APEC), it is also involved in creating the foundational terrain from which this description is enabled.

In light of the above, viewing APEC as a *political* site has two specific consequences of interest to this thesis. The *first* of these is that APEC is a site where the contours of the identity of the state and interstate relations are formed and maintained in particular ways which sustain

particular conceptions of what politics should look like. This relies on accepting the assumption (implicit or explicit in important quarters of the critical theorizing in the discipline of international relations (IR) over the past two decades)<sup>29</sup> that the state has “no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality” and that this reality is achieved through “*a regulated process of repetition.*”<sup>30</sup> APEC as a *political* site is a place where that repetition occurs giving the state and its particular articulation of politics the appearance of presence, of a fixed structured reality. Having no ontological status other than through the acts which constitute its reality also implies that the state and the interstate world is only knowable to us at the level of ‘imagination’. As Michael Walzer stated some time ago, the state “is invisible: it must be personified before it can be seen, symbolized before it can be loved, imagined before it can be conceived.”<sup>31</sup> If the world of the state and its politics are located at the level of imagination, then this world is accessed and given meaning through ‘discourse’ insofar as that imagination can only be expressed or represented discursively. Within this understanding of the world of the state, ‘language’, ‘text’, ‘speech’, or ‘discourse’ is understood to be the primary ground of analysis simply because “language [is no longer seen] as a set of symbols whose function is exhausted by the process of representation but

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<sup>29</sup> On a review of this body of literature see James Der Derian, ‘Post-Theory: The Eternal Return of Ethics in International Relations’ in *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* eds. Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 54-76, and Richard Devetak’s two chapters, ‘Critical Theory’ and ‘Postmodernism’ in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater (New York: St. Martin’s Press), 145-209.

<sup>30</sup> Judith Butler quoted in David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 9 (emphasis in the original quote).

<sup>31</sup> Michael Walzer, ‘On the Role of Symbolism in Political Thought’, *Political Science Quarterly*, 82 (June 1967), 194, quoted in John Gerard Ruggie, ‘Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations’, *International Organization*, 47, no. 1 (1993), 157.

as a set of signs which are part of a system for *generating objects*.”<sup>32</sup> The state and the interstate world as an ‘object’, as a fixed structured reality, is generated at the level of discourse because, from the standpoint adopted in this thesis, it has no ontological status prior to discourse. Thus, politics is (re)produced in the form of the state and interstate relations because “the intelligible worlds or objects and events emerge through contentious discursive, as well as material and institutional, practices” which create them as such.<sup>33</sup> APEC is one of those sites where the ‘intelligible world’ of the state and the brand of state centered politics which has accompanied economic globalization, e.g., the Washington Consensus, are rendered intelligible. This does not mean that there is no ‘material reality’ outside of discourse or that the interstate world has no real tangible consequences, a charge often levelled against so-called ‘post-modernists’ or ‘post-structuralists’. What it does mean however, is “that the meaning of physical objects must be understood by apprehension of their place in a system (or discourse) of socially constructed rules.”<sup>34</sup> It means that this reality “comes about as a result of the unconscious adoption of rules of living, thinking and speaking that are implicit in the texts, speeches or documents that are produced.”<sup>35</sup> Reality is both created from discourse and is rendered intelligible by discourse. Politics centred around the world of states is only accessible or knowable to us at the level of representation which expresses itself through language,

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Shapiro, ‘Literary Production as Politicizing Practice’ in *Language and Politics*, ed. Michael Shapiro (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 222-223 (emphasis added).

<sup>33</sup> Michael Shapiro, ‘Introduction’, in *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities*, eds. Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), xvi.

<sup>34</sup> Michèle Barrett, ‘Ideology, Politics, Hegemony: From Gramsci to Laclau and Mouffe’ in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1994), 258.

<sup>35</sup> John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 1995), 47.

text, speech, or discourse because we cannot apprehend the non-discursive outside of the context provide by di scourse. Within this context, to create meaning and to exist, the imagination of the state relies on a series of dichotomies such as self/ other, friend/ enemy, inside/ outside, domestic/ foreign, sovereignty/ anarchy. These dichotomies constitute the ‘discursive economy’ of the state, i.e., the specific economy of terms which gives the world of the state and its politics their particular form and meaning at any given moment.<sup>36</sup> APEC, as an interstate organization, (re)generates the imaginary of the state and its particular discursive economy. Envisioned as such, APEC is not primarily a product of the state or an outcome of the global economy and its perceived primary generative force, business, as its practice of politics suggests. Rather, APEC is one of those sites where the discursive economy of the state and its relation to the economic is sustained and continuously (re)fashioned thereby contributing to give that which has no ontological status prior to discursivity the appearance of a fixed structured reality. In broad terms, APEC is a site where the presence of an interstate world meshed with economic globalization is shaped and deployed. And the persistence of this imaginary, to which APEC is and has contributed, tends to work at obscuring other forms of imagining politics. This has important implications for the opposition to APEC and the potential for new forms of political imagination this opposition may foster. This leads us to the *second* consequence of viewing APEC as a *political* site.

To come back to the primary argument of this thesis, limiting ourselves to the practice of politics would occult the more profound *political dimension* of APEC’s discourse, and *more importantly* for our understanding of the opposition to APEC it would not allow us to properly grasp the *antagonisms* this discourse contains. The opposition voiced by the parallel NGO forums

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<sup>36</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, 235.

on APEC are in effect responding to these antagonisms. The antagonisms stem from the fact that the more profound political dimension of APEC's discourse, i.e., its particular brand of politics, carries with it implications for the possibilities of social or human identity. Thus, APEC is not merely about economic cooperation among states, and its politics are not just about negotiating trade and investment liberalization inspired by the Washington Consensus. By viewing APEC through the *political* this thesis argues that APEC's discourse and the images this discourse deploys work at creating a particular terrain for identity/ difference. The antagonisms and the opposition stem from how this terrain is too narrowly circumscribed and thus obscures the possible forms of identity/ difference. This means that viewing APEC's discourse as antagonistic entails locating the political at the level where questions of identity are addressed and where resolutions to these questions are sought. Whereas politics can be seen as the outcome of specific historical and spatial conjunctures sustained and limited by particular imaginaries, the political expresses deeper questions of social or human identity and their possible forms.<sup>37</sup> When speaking of the political dimension of APEC's discourse we are therefore speaking of how this discourse contains statements about identity/ difference that seek to arrest the field of meaning. As such, in saying 'APEC means business' APEC's discourse is also deploying a broader *discourse on the social* which occults other possibilities. What is occulted by APEC's discourse, e.g., 'APEC means business', is a discourse on human rights, a discourse on gender, a discourse on labour rights, a discourse on migrant rights,

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<sup>37</sup> Within IT, Michael Dillon has recently formulated a similar conception of the political in his writings on security although he substitutes 'the political' with 'politics'. He writes: "To conceive of politics as being concerned with making way for new possibilities of being requires reimagining politics itself. Specifically, it requires that politics be thought as something which arises from human being as a possibility. To understand human being as a possibility, however, means understanding that it consists in the improbable feat of always already containing more than it is possible to contain; understanding that there is already in human being an excess of being over appearance and identity." Michael Dillon, *Politics of Security: Towards a Political Philosophy of Continental Thought* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1.

a discourse on the environment, a discourse on sustainable development, and so forth. These are the discursive *constitutive outsides* by which the discourse on the social articulated through APEC is circumscribed and given meaning. They constitute elements of the remainder, or the excess by which the meaning of APEC's discourse is enabled. These multiple other discourses enable a system of difference which forms the meaning for the description of the practice of politics which APEC deploys and in this sense are *constitutive* of the latter. In other words, without these other discursive possibilities APEC's description of the relationship between politics and economics would lack the difference through which it could circumscribe itself. It is only through their occultation that APEC's discourse on the social can establish the terrain from which it is imbued with its particular meaning. Inquiring into the political dimension of APEC thus entails inquiring into this work of occultation since it is only by means of an occultation that the meaning which is deployed by APEC's discourse can be formulated. In short, to inquire into the 'politicalness' of APEC, one needs to account for the excess or the remainder, i.e., that which is left out by articulation of APEC's discourse on social *but which at the same time is constitutive of its formation*. The significance of APEC is that important elements of the remainder to the formation of the discourse on the social it (re)deploys has found a regular articulation at the parallel NGO forums. What the variety of NGOs at the 'People's Summits' give voice to is precisely elements of the difference that is occulted by APEC's discourse. APEC's discourse occults the subject positions or identities which these NGOs articulate and it is for this reason that they are opposing APEC.

In responding to the antagonisms and in giving voice to what is occulted by APEC's discourse on the social, *the second argument of this thesis* is that the parallel NGO forums *open the possibility* for a deterritorialization of democracy. Following William Connolly, by this I mean that

in opposing APEC, the possibility is opened to disaggregating elements of the democratic imaginary from territoriality.<sup>38</sup> As Connolly argues, to “disaggregate elements in the democratic imaginary is to identify features that can exceed its state territorialisation.”<sup>39</sup> More specifically, in this thesis deterritorializing democracy means disaggregating territory from the democratic imagination in a manner which no longer locates territoriality as a condition of democracy. By suggesting that the NGO opposition opens the possibility for a deterritorialization of democracy I am not suggesting that what we are witnessing is the beginnings of a ‘cosmopolitan democracy’ or the end the state form. Rather, what I am suggesting is that the discursive economy of the state which works at excluding the democratic imaginary from interstate relations is being contested. The fact that NGOs are opposing APEC, and interstate economic organization, opens the possibility of accessing the democratic imaginary in a space which has traditionally obscured this possibility. APEC lives in that world which, through a specific discursive economy, i.e., domestic/ foreign, self/ other, national/ international, inside/ outside, politics/ economics, has succeeded in maintaining the democratic imaginary at bay. And APEC’s discourse maintains and (re)deploys this discursive economy which has contributed to eclipsing the possibility of deterritorializing democracy. However, the fact that

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<sup>38</sup> Connolly’s “elements of a [democratic] political imagination” include: “(1) the grounding of ‘internal’ politics upon a contiguous territory; (2) the recognition of a people (or nation) on that territory, bound together by a set of shared understandings, identities, debates, and traditions that, it is said, makes possible a common moral life and provides the basis upon which citizen/alien and member/stranger are differentiated; (3) the organization of institutions of electoral accountability and constitutional restraint that enable the territorialized people with shared understandings to rule themselves while protecting fundamental interests and freedoms; (4) the maintenance of high degree of economic self-control and self security to enable the territorial state to shape its fate according to its own deliberations and decisions; (5) the elaboration of internal differentiations that enable a plurality of styles of life to coexist within the frame of the national territorial state; and (6) the recognition, as sovereign and legitimate, of other states that cross the pertinent thresholds with respect to the preceding five elements, making it possible for the internal politics of state rule to be ratified through its recognition by other sovereign states.” See William E. Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 135-136.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

APEC and its practice of politics have met with regular and sustained opposition, and have become the site of multiple antagonisms on issues of human rights, ecology, sustainable development, labour rights, gender, third world worker rights, and so on, suggests that democracy is not primarily institutional but rather is *symbolic* and supersedes forms of government. In this sense, there is a democracy outside of its institutional form, a democracy which escapes territorialization despite the fact it may continue to function from the confines of territorial space. It is this understanding of democracy, inspired by the works of Claude Lefort, Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau, as well as Connolly, which allows for the second argument of this thesis. Democracy *understood as a symbolic ordering of social relations* provides the context from which the NGO contestation to that which normally falls outside of the democratic imaginary, i.e., an international economic organization, is enabled. Whether the possibility of deterritorializing democracy is secured in more practical terms however, depends entirely on how the NGO discourse is articulated. Even though the symbolic order of democracy may be the generative frame of the opposition, it is not certain that this opposition will lead to expanding the democratic imaginary in a manner which challenges, destabilizes, and renders contingent territoriality.

### ***The structure of the thesis***

The remainder of this thesis will elaborate the tools necessary to envision the APEC/ NGO relation as I have proposed above. Chapter Two will explore the theoretical position of this thesis.<sup>40</sup> More specifically, it will provide a reading of the *political* from which the APEC/ NGO

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<sup>40</sup> Sections of the argument presented in Chapter Two have appeared in Marc G. Doucet, 'Standing Nowhere(?): Navigating the Third Route on the Question of Foundation in International Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 28, no.3 (1999), 289-310.

relationship will be examined. In order to provide this reading, Chapter Two approaches the political through the foundationalist/ anti-foundationalist debate which has recently surfaced in international theory (IT), by which I mean international relations theory and global political economy theory. This debate offers an important entry point into the interplay between the question of foundation and the political. However, as it currently stands, this manner of naming the debate offers unsatisfactory choices between the pure presence or pure absence of foundation. This further leads to an impasse in terms of the political. Any foundation for the political, including progressive politics, can be shown to be contingent, arbitrary, and ultimately groundless by the so-called 'anti-foundationalist' position. Consequently, from the foundationalist perspective, anti-foundationalism is seen to be negating the foundation needed for the possibility of emancipatory political action. The problem is that 'anti-foundationalism' can convincingly show that pre-political foundation is impossible. By redefining the debate in a manner which sees foundation as caught within its own (im)possibility, the second chapter argues that foundation must be seen from absence not presence. However, this does not disarm the political. Rather, it becomes its very condition of possibility. Within this context, unconditional foundation is viewed as impossible since it is always already political. And yet importantly the question of foundation is not eliminated since the political is precisely the attempt at laying and claiming unconditional ground, but within a context which disenables such an attempt. In short, what is being argued is that foundation is political and the political is foundation. This paradox opens the possibility to view foundation as (im)possible. In order to envision this understanding of foundation and the political, the chapter begins by using the work of French political philosopher Claude Lefort, in particular his understanding of the 'democratic adventure'. The interest of Lefort's view of democracy is how he sees the latter as a

new form of social being where social relations are ordered symbolically in a way which opens the question of foundation, places it at the heart of the social, and disallows answering it. As a form of symbolic order, democracy raises profound questions of social being and its relation to Alterity or otherness which go beyond democracy's institutional form. In effect, the democratic adventure answers these questions by leaving them unanswerable. This leads us to a form of metaphysics which, following Simon Critchley one could call a 'metaphysics of absence'.<sup>41</sup> This way of viewing democracy has two important consequences for this thesis and our understanding of the political.

The first of these is how it mimics the notion of 'aporia' explored by Jacques Derrida. The aporia is an impasse or an undecidable moment which can be seen as confronting all political statements at one point or another with the contingency of their foundation. The only way out of the aporia is through a '*coup de force*' which leads to an arbitrary grounding of the statement. The '*coup de force*' can be seen as the moment when the political attempts to lay foundation, but it is also the same moment which reveals foundation as political, i.e., as just another '*coup de force*'. We can relate this to the way APEC tries to claim a foundational ground by invoking the discursive economy of state and interstate cooperation framed within economic globalization. The '*coup de force*' in APEC's discourse lies in the manner in which it claims to be a product of these prior realities rather than a site from where these realities are rendered intelligible. The second consequence of Lefort's view of democracy is that it places social division, antagonism or conflict as an insurmountable dimension of social relations. With the new symbolic ordering of social relations, social division is no longer mediated by an unconditional figure as was the case prior to

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<sup>41</sup> Simon Critchley, 'Re-tracing the Political: Politics and Community in the Work of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy', in *The Political Subject of Violence*, eds. David Campbell and Michael Dillon (New York: Manchester University Press), 80.

the democratic adventure where the Sovereign gave a figure to the social and its divisions by ordering the relations of the 'self' to the 'other'. With the democratic symbolic order the relations of the 'self' to the 'other' are always open and potentially antagonistic because there is no unconditional ordering of social relations. Those who have most thoroughly theorized the implications of this understanding of social division are, I would suggest, Laclau and Mouffe. Their work on antagonism will be explored and will serve to examine the antagonism in the APEC/NGO relation. Lefort's view of democracy as well as the two implications it engenders enable us to make the distinction between '*la politique*', or politics and '*le politique*' or the political introduced earlier. As such, subsequent to exploring the notion of antagonism, Chapter Two will elaborate more thoroughly how this thesis envisions this distinction, providing the framework to explore APEC's discourse in Chapter Three as well as the NGO discourse in Chapter Five. A final section of Chapter Two will examine the category of discourse and its relation to the categories of ideology and hegemony. The centrality of discourse for this thesis stems from the simple contention that "[i]t is through language that the objects that are meaningful for us are constructed."<sup>42</sup> Our understanding of reality can only be accessed through discourse. As such, language or discourse is the medium through which an apprehension of the interplay between the political and foundation can be given. It is through the structure of discourse that the work of occultation of the political appears and gives life to the antagonism. In this sense, it is the structure of the discourse on the social (re)deployed by APEC which produces the antagonism and subsequent organized opposition.

The ideas which are explored in Chapter Two (as well as Chapter Four) and which make up the theoretical vantage point of the thesis do not constitute 'traditional' sources for the

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<sup>42</sup> Anna Marie Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 1998), 85.

field of international relations. Much of this literature stems from the field of political thought. This may pose a problem for those who see in disciplinary lines something more than different vantage points from which can be offered alternative readings. Be that as it may, deep explorations into political thought have been for some time a common exercise for those in IR concerned with critical standpoints. Starting with Robert Cox's usage of Gramsci and Polanyi, followed by Richard Ashley's usage of Foucault, James Der Derian's usage of Virilio and Baudrillard, Michael Dillon's usage of Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, Arendt, and Levinas, and David Campbell's usage of Derrida and Levinas, "challenging boundaries"<sup>43</sup> in recent years have been frequent and in my judgement fruitful. This seems to reflect a complete reversal with regard to the direction of theory in the field of international relations and global political economy. Whereas prior to Cox, the direction of theory seemed to be moving towards creating very narrow theoretical frameworks which could then be applied across the entire field (take Kenneth Waltz's usage of microeconomic theory for his formulation of neo-realism, or neo-liberal institutionalism's usage of game theory for its notion of interstate regimes), what is now occurring is precisely the opposite. Authors are moving towards more profound and broader thinking which is subsequently used to (re)read relatively narrow topics such as the Gulf War, the conflict in Bosnia, or realism's Hans Morgenthau.<sup>44</sup> It seems as though international theory increasingly becomes the vantage point from where political thinking begins.

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<sup>43</sup> This is the theme of an edited series by David Campbell and Michael Shapiro. See in particular volume two of this series *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities*, eds. Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> In terms of the Gulf War see for instance Gearóid Ó Tuathail, 'The Effacement of Place? US Foreign Policy and the Spatiality of the Gulf Crisis', *Antipode*, 25, no. 1 (1993), 4-31. On Bosnia See David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), on Hans Morgenthau, see Ulrik Enemark Peterson, 'Breathing Nietzsche's Air: New Reflections on Morgenthau's Concepts of Power and Human Nature', *Alternatives*, 24 (1999), 83-118.

That authors such as Derrida have also felt the need to account for the ‘international’ seems to indicate that this is not solely limited to the disciplines of international relations and global political economy.<sup>45</sup>

Following up the theoretical discussion of Chapter Two, Chapter Three moves on to the stage of illustration by exploring how APEC’s discourse can be seen as operating both at the level of the practice of politics as well as at the level of the political. The chapter focuses more specifically on a number of ‘discursive manoeuvres’ which traverse what I see as the practical and formal discourse of APEC. These manoeuvres inform the imaginary from which APEC is read and which subsequently its discourse sustains. With the term discursive manoeuvre I seek to capture how APEC’s discourse gives the appearance that it operates solely at the level of the practice of politics sustaining the illusion that APEC is merely the byproduct of more fundamental forces such as the global economy or rising interdependence among states. The objective is to show how these manoeuvres occult APEC’s political dimension and lead to a (de)politicization of APEC’s discourse. By (de)politicization I seek to capture the idea that the manoeuvres can never entirely succeed since the act of (de)politicization is a *political* act in and of itself. In other words, the claim to an unpolitical discourse is itself political hence the brackets in ‘(de)politicization’. APEC’s discursive manoeuvres seek a (de)politicization because they give the appearance of being the product of determined structures while occulting the fact that their political move contributes to (re)generating and patrolling these same structures. As mentioned earlier, APEC is political since it is a site where that which has no ontological status prior to discursivity, e.g., cooperation/ conflict, inside/ outside,

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<sup>45</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L’Etat de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1993).

politics/ economics, is given the appearance of fixed determined reality. This political move works at occulting other possibilities. Of particular concern for this thesis, is the possibility of deterritorializing democracy.

Chapter Four continues to develop the theoretical argument of the thesis by picking up elements developed in Chapter Two. In order to elaborate more specifically the vantage point from which the opposition to APEC organized by NGOs can be viewed as opening the possibility for a deterritorialization of democracy. Such a vantage point needs to be articulated in a way which remains consistent with the view of foundation and the political elaborated in Chapter Two, and illustrated in Chapter Three. It must be able to take into account the place of the aporia and social antagonism within the democratic symbolic order. Informed by the reading of democracy provided by Lefort, Chapter Four examines how Laclau and Mouffe as well as William Connolly have pushed this reading in a direction which permits us to give an account of *collective action against relations of oppression*. This account provides a view of the organized opposition to APEC as an instance of such collective action. The point of departure from which this view is formulated starts from the premise that within the democratic symbolic order the relations of the 'self' to the 'other' are not pre-ordered and that consequently identity can only be constructed relationally. In short, identity can only be known in relation to 'others' since it is vis-à-vis 'others' that a system of difference can be created thereby giving meaning to identity. The paradox, as Connolly would say, of this way of viewing identity is that the relation to the 'other' is both that which gives the 'self' identity but which is also the potential antagonist impeding the completion of identity. The 'other' is always a potential antagonist since the articulation of 'his' identity can be seen as eliminating the space for my own. From this understanding of identity formation as relational and always potentially

antagonistic Chapter Four provides an explanation of *why, when, how, and upon what* discursive basis collective action against relations of subordination can be formulated. Following others, I label this explanation an “agonistic model of democratic politics”.<sup>46</sup> The intent of such a model is to push towards a democratic negotiation of social antagonisms while recognizing the constitutive character of social division within the democratic symbolic order, hence the usage of the term *agonism*. An agonistic relationship is one where the antagonist is viewed as a legitimate adversary. Prior to exploring how such negotiations can be envisioned however, the chapter must first negotiate its own way through ‘the problem of globalization’ for agonistic democratic politics. Laclau and Mouffe, as well as others which have been influenced by their work most often view globalization as a fundamental challenge to the objectives of agonistic democracy which are to deepen and expand the principles of liberty and equality.<sup>47</sup> Rather than seeing globalization as circumventing the political project of an agonistic model of democratic politics, I argue that globalization *as a political* discourse produces antagonisms which may lead to democratic openings. The parallel NGO forums on APEC provide an example of collective action against relations of oppression which are framed by the discourse of globalization given figure by APEC. And yet this opposition is formulated in a manner which follows the objectives of deepening and expanding the principles of agonistic democracy. In particular, the NGO opposition opens the possibility of expanding those principles beyond territoriality by disaggregating the democratic imaginary from its correspondence with territory. What generates this possibility is the antagonism which is produced by APEC’s discourse

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<sup>46</sup> Seyla Benhabib, ‘The Democratic Moment and the Problem of Difference’, in *Democracy and Difference. Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>47</sup> See in particular the collection of articles in *Radical Democracy: Identity, Citizenship, and the State*, ed. David Trend (Routledge: New York, 1996).

on the social framed by the discourse of economic globalization.

Chapter Five resumes the work of illustration by providing a reading of the NGO discourse which has been articulated at the parallel forums. More specifically, the chapter examines the final ‘declarations’ or ‘statements’ issued by the forums. Although short and not reflective of the entire NGO opposition, these declarations remain of significant interest to the extent that they offer us an entry point into the basis of NGO contestation as well as the alternative vision this contestation puts forth. The objective of the chapter is to examine whether or not the NGO discourse seizes on the possibility of deterritorialization democracy. In other words, how is the NGO discourse articulated, what form does its practice of politics take, and is the correspondence between territory and democracy problematized? Before examining the ‘declarations’ however, the chapter explores some of the literature in IT that has addressed the category of ‘new social movements’ in which I place the NGOs opposing APEC. In order to develop our understanding of new social movements, the chapter distinguishes between the literature which in examining this category is sensitive to the understanding of foundation and the political of this thesis from literature which is not. More often than not, new social movements are conceptualized in a manner which views them as inherently progressive and engaged in transformative politics. Although this may often be the case, it assigns to new social movements a status prior to discursivity which is at odds with the theoretical stance of this thesis. The chapter argues that in lieu of this view of new social movements, we should consider them as political sites to be apprehended at the level of discourse. Through their discourse, they offer the possibility of challenging, destabilizing, and rendering contingent the dominant political imaginary of an interstate world by offering alternative visions of what politics should be. However, that possibility may not always be articulated in a manner which is truly transformative

*if* we are concerned with new *political* possibilities. With respect to the political possibility of interest to this thesis, the chapter concludes that the NGO opposition to APEC has not consistently moved towards a deterritorialization of the democratic imaginary. Despite some important openings found notably in the Kyoto Statement produced at the close of the International NGO Conference on APEC in 1995, and the Declaration of the Manila People's Forum in Manila in 1996, there has been a tendency to reterritorialize democracy. This reterritorialization comes about when the demands and protests are addressed to the traditional modern space of politics: states and their governments.

The concluding chapter revisits the primary arguments of the thesis and reflects on the thesis' contributions and limits. The chapter focuses on those areas of the thesis which may provide avenues for future research. The chapter also reflects on the thesis' own 'political project': deterritorializing democracy. In light of the results of the analysis in Chapter Five, the possibility of deterritorializing democracy which I associated with the NGO opposition has not fully materialized. Deterritorializing the democratic imaginary remains mostly at the level of possibility. As such, even though the democratic symbolic order can be seen as the frame from which the NGO opposition to APEC is made possible, the discourse of contestation at the parallel fora has not seized upon the potential of disaggregating territory from the democratic imaginary. Thus, the sedimentation of a deterritorialized form of democracy has not taken hold.

## Chapter Two

# Navigating the Third Route on the Question of Foundation and the Political in International Theory

### *Introduction*

A recent survey by Steve Smith on the ‘self-image’ of the discipline of international relations (IR) as it is constructed through its theoretical debates concluded by stating that the most important debate among all that have taken place in international theory (IT) is the one surrounding the question of foundation. Smith writes:

[...]this is a far deeper debate than that offered by the inter-paradigm debate or by the dispute between neo-realists and neo-liberal institutionalists. It is a particularly interesting and important debate because it propels international theory towards the central debates within the other social sciences. In this sense, it undermines the very misleading characterization of international theory as autonomous and distinct which has dominated virtually all the self-images discussed above. By doing so, it requires international theory to be less parochial and exclusive. I have put this debate at the end of my list because I feel it to be the most important one for the future of international theory.<sup>1</sup>

According to Smith, this debate situates itself within the recent post-positivist turn in IT<sup>2</sup> which has lead to the distinction between ‘explanatory’ and ‘constitutive’ theory. Explanatory theories, or what Robert Cox once called “problem solving theories”,<sup>3</sup> are founded on the positivist contention that the goal of social theory is to describe and give order to the various dimensions of an existing ‘world-out-there’, an object independent of the subject perceiving it. Constitutive or post-positivist

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Smith, ‘The Self-Image of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory’, in *International Relations Theory Today*, eds. Ken Booth and Steve Smith (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> See in particular Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski eds., *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Claire Turenne Sjolander and Wayne S. Cox eds., *Beyond Positivism: Critical Reflections on International Relations* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Robert W. Cox, ‘Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory’, in *Neorealism and its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 208.

theories, on the other hand, understand theory as always part of the reality it seeks to explain. Any explanation will be part of its own reality and consequently participate in the creation of the latter. Following earlier works by Nick Rengger and Mark Hoffman,<sup>4</sup> Smith further divides constitutive theories into two opposing categories, namely “critical interpretative theory” (or critical theory) and “radical interpretative theory” (or postmodernism and poststructuralism).<sup>5</sup> These two tacks in IT largely reproduce the broader debate in political theory and political philosophy between what has been termed Habermasian critical theory and Derridian and Foucaultian poststructuralist theory, what Richard Bernstein has called the “grand Either/Or”.<sup>6</sup> What distinguishes these two tacks in current IT according to Smith is their path on the question of foundation. Whereas critical interpretative theory accepts a minimalist, albeit contestable, foundation of rationalism upon which subsequently an emancipatory political project could be founded, radical interpretative theory rejects all foundational claims, seeing all such claims as a commitment to a universalistic project leading to marginalization, exclusion, and violence. The opposition between these two tacks is what leads Smith to characterize the debate as one between ‘foundationalists’ and ‘anti-foundationalists’. This characterization is by no means limited to Smith. Not only is it shared in broad terms by other

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<sup>4</sup> Nick Rengger and Mark Hoffman, ‘Modernity, Post-modernism and International Relations’, in *Post-Modernity in the Social Sciences* eds. J. Doherty, E. Graham, and M. Malek (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1992), 127-46. See also the earlier debate between Hoffman and Rengger which stems from Hoffman’s article on critical theory and the inter-paradigm debate. Mark Hoffman, ‘Critical Theory and the Inter-Paradigm Debate’, *Millennium* 16, no. 2, (1987), 231-249. Nick Rengger, ‘Going Critical? A Response to Hoffman’, *Millennium* 17, no. 1 (1988), 81-9, and Hoffman’s response, Mark Hoffman, ‘Conversations on Critical International Relations Theory’, *Millennium* 17, no. 1 (1988), 91-95.

<sup>5</sup> On these two critical currents as they are articulated in IT see Richard Devetak’s two chapters, ‘Critical Theory’ and ‘Postmodernism’ in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 145-209.

<sup>6</sup> Richard J. Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 8.

authors in IT,<sup>7</sup> it is also reflective of how the debate has been characterized in political theory and in the social sciences more generally.

I agree with Smith that the space opened by these two tacks is a profoundly important moment in IT, more so than any other debate. However, I would suggest that by characterizing the debate as one between foundationalists and *anti*-foundationalists, Smith, following others, leads us to an impasse and limits the potential contributions of this debate, particularly with respect to how the latter may offer a (re)thinking of the question of foundation and its relation to the political. What I propose here is to navigate between the two tacks identified by Smith in order to find a third route opened by the questioning of foundation but which simultaneously has been occulted by the way the debate has been characterized.

***The discursive manoeuvre of the foundation/ anti-foundation debate in international theory***

By characterizing this most recent debate in IT as one between foundationalists and anti-foundationalists Smith is effectively deploying a dichotomy in which the Archimedean point is the *presence* or *absence* of foundation for thought and, more generally, for social being. From the vantage of this characterization, for foundationalists there must be some primary common ground or ethical first principle which can propel us into the future, or some final point which motivates our progression. In other words, there must be some sort of beginning or some sort of end upon which thought, the social, and subsequently political action can be founded. Without such

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<sup>7</sup> Aside from the authors already mentioned, Jim George and Ole Weaver have also categorized the critical theorizing in the field along similar lines. See Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics A Critical (Re)Introduction to International Relations* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), chapter seven and chapter eight, and Ole Weaver, 'The Rise and Fall of the Inter-Paradigm Debate', in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, eds. Smith, Booth and Zalewski, 148-185.

foundation not only is there a risk of rejecting the emancipatory commitment of the Enlightenment, but we also risk facing the abyss of nihilism, the paralysis of undecidability, and most importantly, the impossibility of emancipatory political action so central to the critical tradition in social sciences.

The dichotomy suggests that for the opposite side, anti-foundationalism, any foundation no matter how minimal or open to contestation, is the ground for universalistic 'metanarratives'. Such metanarratives are seen to have led to (un)imaginable violent acts, the Holocaust<sup>8</sup> and the totalitarian experience being preeminent instances of the catastrophic consequences informed by modernity's essentialist foundation *par excellence*: reason.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, as has been shown by many postmodernists, with the impossibility of a unified knowing subject in the wake of the 'death of the subject' there is no vantage point, no 'God's eye view' from which such a foundational principle could be decided. The subject after all is signified, not a signifier, and therefore is not a unified being capable of acting *upon* the world. S(he) is constituted relationally and thus always contingent upon the particular relations among an infinite combination of signifiers constituting 'systems of difference' through which the subject is knowable.

For foundationalists this 'death of the subject' most often leads to the death of politics, in particular the possibility of emancipatory political action and by extension the possibility of changing the world. Herein lies the unacceptable predicament for the political created by this

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<sup>8</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> On the inextricable link between modern reason and violence see *The Political Subject of Violence*, eds. David Campbell and Michael Dillon (New York: Manchester University Press, 1993). See in particular Campbell and Dillon's introductory chapter, 'The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations', 1-47.

debate. On the one hand, any essentialist universalistic transcendental foundation unveils itself to be precisely the opposite, unfounded, groundless, illusory. Since there is no subject position or essentialist point from which such a foundation could be claimed, all foundational claims are inherently deconstructable, shown to be unfounded. Yet, if this is true, then how can politics survive, from what ground will the political take place? On what can the political be based if all foundational claims stemming from all subject positions can be deconstructed? This is precisely the question asked by Simon Critchley of Derrida's 'anti-foundationalist' deconstructionism:

Deconstruction can certainly be employed as a powerful means of political analysis. For example, showing how a certain dominant political regime- apartheid, say- is based on a set of undecidable presuppositions is an important step in the subversion of that regime's claim to legitimacy. Showing, as Ernesto Laclau has done, how the terrain of the social does not attain closure, but is an ever incomplete, undecidable structure, is a crucial step in the subversion of dominant conceptions of society and the development of new political strategies. But how is one to account for the move from undecidability to the political *decision* to combat that domination? [...] How does one make a decision in an undecidable terrain? [...] [With deconstruction] I can no longer ground my political decisions on some ontological basis, or *eidos*, or on a set of *a priori* principles or procedures.<sup>10</sup>

It would appear as though 'we' are paralysed, both because there is no 'we' to begin with, no unconditional or essentialized subject position in which the 'we' could be placed. And furthermore, 'we' cannot move forward because there is no foundation that can claim to be 'foundational', that is some common essentialist point upon which 'we' could advance an emancipatory political project. As Critchley suggests, confronted by the undecidability produced by deconstruction, there no longer seems to be the possibility of unconditional metaphysical principles for progressive politics. Viewed in this way, it is no wonder that many see the recent poststructuralist turn in

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<sup>10</sup> Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction, Derrida & Levinas* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 199-200.

political theory as intellectual debauchery bordering on *fin de siècle* heresy worthy of public scorn.<sup>11</sup>

Granted, the above is an oversimplified, even gross, caricature of what can be found in the writings of those who occupy (by choice or by unwanted association) either position in this debate. Indeed, this oversimplification is often an effect of any debate. However, I would argue that the characterization of the debate informs our understanding of the question of foundation and its articulation with the political regardless of its accuracy in portraying the two positions. And as it stands, the way the debate is labelled effectively leads us to an impasse. In Bernstein's words, 'either' we are foundationalist, 'or' we are not, and so we are faced with a 'grand Either/ Or'. The problem is that this positive/ negative dichotomy creates an absolute division between the pure presence *or* the pure absence of foundation. Any way out is effectively occulted since we seem to be limited with two unsatisfactory and very problematic positions. However, this impasse may merely be the consequence of the discursive manoeuvre that is enabled by the manner in which this particular characterization of the debate, this 'grand Either/ Or', delimits the terrain and establishes the rules of the debate. Indeed, with this characterization, the debate necessarily revolves around the privileged term foundation insofar as the latter term of the dichotomy, *anti*-foundationalism, is merely the negative contraposition derived from the positive first term. Assigning the negative to the latter term generally leads to negatively characterizing the work of those who are seen as 'anti-foundationalist'. Rather than be seen as taking seriously the very question of foundation, 'anti-

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<sup>11</sup> I am specifically referring to Derrida's 1992 Cambridge University honorary degree fiasco. Apparently dismayed that Cambridge had nominated Derrida for a honorary degree, a group of philosophers took it upon themselves to denounce publicly the nomination by sending a letter to the London *Times* in which they characterized poststructuralism as, among other things, "semi-intelligible". In the letter they urged the faculty of the university to deny Derrida the degree. Derrida did get the degree but not without a vote (336 to 204), the first such vote in thirty years. For an amusing and highly political reading of this event see John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 38-41.

foundationalists' are *a priori* 'les malfaiteurs' when it comes to thinking about *the* most important question of social being. The crucial point is that this 'antiness', this negative or destructive label is assigned from the standpoint of foundationalism when one characterizes the debate as foundationalism/*anti*-foundationalism. When one chooses to name the debate in this manner, the latter term of the dichotomy merely functions as the 'constitutive outside'<sup>12</sup> for the privileged first term. The terrain that is drawn is therefore not a neutral ground in which both positions have equal standing. On the contrary, it is highly political to the extent that it favours one position and its objectives over the other while occulting through a discursive manoeuvre a body of literature and what the latter may offer in our understanding of the question of foundation and its relation to the political. It occults this literature because it is labelled from the onset as 'anti' and therefore has nothing constructive to contribute the debate. Furthermore, the point of departure that is privileged by the foundationalist/ anti-foundationalist debate *is foundation understood as presence* insofar as the term foundation draws an equivalence with the existence of some sort of essential ground. In other words, the terrain of the debate, by means of a political act, privileges the *meaning* assigned to foundation that is invoked by the primary term of the dichotomy.

Ironically therefore, by redeploing this characterization Smith is clearly counteracting the genealogical method he employs for his reading of the field. Following the title

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<sup>12</sup> The term 'constitutive outside' used here is formulated by Mouffe and stems from her reading of what is at play in Derrida's work, in particular his use of such notions as '*supplément*', '*trace*' and '*différence*'. By 'constitutive outside' Mouffe seeks to capture how identity formation can only be understood as relational or constructed through difference, and how consequently any identity is marked by an outside to itself. This outside invokes the idea within 'poststructuralism' that identity formation is conditioned by an irreducible excess which prohibits closure and renders impossible the self constitution of identity. Rather, it is an infinite play of difference which can only be partially fixed. See Chantal Mouffe, 'Pour un pluralisme agonistique', *La revue du MAUSS* no. 2, (1993), 101. In English see Chantal Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics', in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, eds. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 379.

of his introductory chapter *The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory*, Smith's stated objective is to "show how the history of international theory, and specifically the ways in which international thought has been categorized, has created privileged, that is to say primary and dominant, understandings and interpretations."<sup>13</sup> This is consistent with the objectives of genealogy that he borrows from Michel Foucault and which, as he mentions, is also used by James Der Derian and Richard Ashley within IR. Although Smith adds that "[t]his is not the place to judge these two approaches [foundationalism/ anti-foundationalism], since there exist no common standards by which such a judgement might be made",<sup>14</sup> it seems quite evident that this is precisely what occurs with the current characterization. As it stands, the divide is already a profoundly political judgement. In a classic modern form, Smith invokes a simple hierarchical dichotomy which overtly favours and normalizes a particular understanding of foundation by privileging the first term and the meaning this first term carries.<sup>15</sup> This is precisely the type of dichotomy that most genealogists love to 'deconstruct' in order to reveal the power play, or the *'coup de force'*, as Derrida would say, that is always involved in the creation of meaning within modern thought.

What is the point of 'deconstructing' the way the debate has been characterized?

Following Judith Butler,

[...] the point is not to do away with foundations, or even to champion a position that goes under the name of antifoundationalism. Both of those positions belong together as different versions of foundationalism and the skeptical problematic it engenders. Rather, the task is to interrogate what the theoretical move that establishes

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<sup>13</sup> Smith, 'The Self-Image of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory', 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>15</sup> I sincerely suspect that this is not Smith's objective. On the contrary, to the extent that Smith seeks to employ the genealogical method, I think he tends to side with, or at least is more sensitive to those in IR most often associated with this method, i.e., 'anti-foundationalists'.

foundations *authorizes*, and what precisely it excludes or forecloses.<sup>16</sup>

As such, the way the debate is seen informs the way in which we understand the question of foundation. To use Butler's words, what is authorized by the current characterization of the debate is the privileging of the standpoint of foundation understood as presence which is meant to be the prerequisite for any type of political act. As such, this characterization occults a way of viewing foundation which I will propose in the following sections, that may enable us to think the latter and its relation to the political without invoking the presence of an essentialist universal ground leading to the exclusion of forms of thinking the problématique of foundation falling outside that ground. If we abandon the equivalence between foundation and presence then we may be able to open the terrain of the debate without abandoning the political.

The third route I am proposing here attempts just that. What I am proposing seeks to redefine the terrain of the debate by viewing foundation as *(im)possible*. What enables this third route is the contention that foundation and its articulation with the political does not revolve around a presence in the sense of a positive social essence. Rather, the starting point is that foundation and the political are conditioned by an absence or a void which is constitutive of the social. In Derridian terms, foundation is caught within its own aporia in the sense that it is the experience of its own impossibility.<sup>17</sup> As conditioned by absence, foundation is the experience of its own impossibility

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<sup>16</sup> Judith Butler, 'Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"', in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, eds. Butler and Scott, 7.

<sup>17</sup> This rather difficult aporetic formulation is used by Derrida in his work on the relationship between deconstruction, justice, and law. He writes: "[...] deconstruction takes place in the interval that separates the undeconstructibility of justice from the deconstructibility of *droit* (authority, legitimacy, and so on). *It is possible as an experience of the impossible* [emphasis added], there where, even if it does not exist (or does not yet exist, or never does exist), *there is justice.*" Jacques Derrida, 'Force of Law: The "Mystical Foundation of Authority"', in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, eds. Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson (Routledge: New York, 1992), 15. Although I do not by any means equate Derridian justice with the understanding of foundation developed here, I do think that the

insofar as it is always already political. Consequently, foundation can never be foundational, or absent of contingency. And yet, the crucial point is that doing away with foundation is not possible either, precisely because the political is the attempt at foundation, the attempt at laying unconditional ground. In the words of Slavoj Žižek, “the structure of the political act as such is ‘essentialist’.”<sup>18</sup> Doing away with foundation would amount to doing away with the political, something which in itself is already a political act. Thus, what I am proposing here is neither foundationalist nor is it anti-foundationalist *if* we understand the debate as in terms of the ‘Either/Or’: the necessity of choosing between the full presence or the full absence of foundation. In fact, these two positions are *constitutive* of the very question of foundation within the tack navigated below. Admittedly, redefining the terrain of the debate as I suggest will not create a neutral ground giving equal standing to both current positions on the question of foundation since such an unpolitical ground is effectively impossible. It does privilege the standpoint of a certain kind of ‘anti-foundationalism’. What this redefinition seeks to reject however, is the meaning that the label ‘anti-foundationalism’ carries. It rejects the possibility of eliminating the question of foundation from the field of political thought and thereby opposes an ‘anti-foundationalist’ position which would claim a total elimination of the foundationalism problématique. There is a distinction to be made between a position which refuses foundation *as presence* (the position I seek to develop here), and one which is avowedly anti-foundationalist. What I am proposing therefore, is not a commensuration or a reconciliation of what is seen as the two sides of the debate. Again, my

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manner in which for Derrida *le droit* (law) attempts to access justice but is never able (since that would immediately subvert justice) is similar to the manner that foundation seeks to be foundational but that, in its attempt, is always already subverted by the political. It is in this sense that foundation is the experience of its own impossibility.

<sup>18</sup> Slavoj Žižek and Renata Salecl, ‘Lacan in Slovenia’ in *A Critical Sense: Interviews with Intellectuals*, ed. Peter Osborne (London: Routledge, 1996), 34.

contention is that the current characterization of the debate on the question of foundation in IT has the effect of occulting a third way of viewing foundation and its relation to the political by creating a terrain which equates foundation to presence.

It is at this juncture, opened up by the debate between foundationalists and anti-foundationalists that we may begin to (re)think the political in a way that navigates *in-between* the ‘either/or’, and that moves beyond an opposition between the absence or presence of foundation. By viewing foundation as conditioned by an absence we may be able to formulate a new understanding of the political that may be useful in forming a basis from which one can construct a critical view within IT that does not invoke an essentialist ground along with the unacknowledged violence which accompanies essentialism. It is from this angle that some recent, and not so recent, work in political theory may offer an interesting point of entry into the question of foundation and its consequences for the political that enables the charting of the third route I identify above. I am thinking of the ‘theoretical’ currents traversing the work of authors such as Claude Lefort, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Jacques Derrida, and Slavoj Žižek, among others. In the works of these authors we find traces of the interplay between the political and the question of foundation as conditioned by an absence or a void. Thus, my contention is that their work can be seen as an attempt to articulate a ‘metaphysics of absence’ as opposed to a ‘metaphysics of presence’.<sup>19</sup> It is this dimension which reunites them and which I will explore below in an effort to construct a *way of viewing* foundation and the political that can be used within IT.

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<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that the affinity I draw between the works of these authors is based on my own interpretation. I do not wish to suggest that these authors constitute a homogeneous body. They have significant dissimilarities which should not be discounted.

### *'La dissolution des repères de la certitude'*

In order to understand how foundation and the political are conditioned by an absence constitutive of the social we need to understand how the question of foundation as a 'societal' question stems from what Claude Lefort calls a '*mise en forme*' of the social, that is a shaping of the social, one which is specific to modern as opposed to premodern forms of social being. The modern is distinguished from the premodern by a different '*mise en forme*'. What is '*mise en forme*', what is shaped, for Lefort is *the social and that which functions as its excess*: its Alterity, its Otherness, or what Lefort calls the social's '*lieu autre*'.<sup>20</sup> With the category of '*lieu autre*', Lefort is seeking to articulate a form of a metaphysics of absence to the extent that in his thinking, the social's '*lieu autre*' functions as an absence or a void, but one which conditions the social, participates in its '*mise en forme*'. As such, for Lefort what demarcates different forms of 'societies' is how they deal with the question of their Alterity or how they deal with the absence or

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<sup>20</sup> This notion of an excess to the social from which the latter is organized is what leads Lefort to draw a parallel between the condition of philosophy and that of religion. Philosophy and religion, albeit in different language, point to an excess of being which cannot be captured but which conditions the social. As Lefort writes: "What philosophical thought strives to preserve is the experience of a difference which goes beyond differences of opinion [...]; *the experience of a difference which is not at the disposal of human beings* [emphasis added], whose advent does not take place *within* human history, and which can not be abolished therein; the experience of a difference which relates human beings to their humanity, and which means that their humanity cannot be self-contained, that it cannot set its own limits, and that it cannot absorb its origins and ends into those limits. Every religion *states* in its own way that human society can only open on to itself by being held in an opening it did not create." Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, trans. by David Macey (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 222. It is the relation between the social and its excess as articulated through the notion of Alterity or Otherness that distinguishes a societies '*mise en forme*'. Lefort's thinking on the question of Alterity is profoundly influenced by the work of Merleau-Ponty in particular the author's notion of 'flesh'. See Claude Lefort, 'Flesh and Otherness', in *Ontology and Alterity in Merleau-Ponty*, eds. Galen A. Johnson and Michael B. Smith (Evanston Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 2-13. The notion of 'flesh' seeks to embody a pre-ontological condition of being which conditions for Lefort the social and its political form. As Sue Cataldi notes: "By *Flesh* Merleau-Ponty intended to indicate something which had no name in traditional Western philosophy. Flesh, he says, might be understood in the ancient sense of 'element' as a wholly generalized manner of Being 'that brings a style of Being wherever there is a fragment of being.' It is also his (explicit) expression for the fundamental unity permeating all interrelated, interwoven things. Flesh, in its elemental sense, is precessive and progenitive. *That is, Flesh is always already There; and it functions in the ontology as a source, as 'the formative medium of the subject and object' and 'the inauguration of the where and the when.'*" See Sue L. Cataldi, *Emotion, Depth, and Flesh A Study of Sensitive Space* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 60 (emphasis added).

void. The answer to this question in Lefortian thinking functions as an ‘originary decision’.<sup>21</sup> Both the political and foundation are conditioned by this Alterity and its relation to the social. That there has been a progressive secularization of the practice of politics does not therefore entail the secularization of *the political* in Lefortian thinking. I will return to this point in some detail in later sections. Suffice it to say for now that, for Lefort, what the religious worked at symbolizing in premodern forms of society does not disappear with the disentanglement of religion from politics in Modernity. As such, Lefort’s thinking here is informed by a conviction “that no human society, whatever it may be, can be organized in terms of *pure self-immanence*.”<sup>22</sup>

Once we recognize that humanity opens on to itself by being held in an opening it does not create, we have to accept that the change in religion is not to be read simply as a sign that the divine is a human invention, but as a sign of the deciphering of the divine or, beneath the appearance of the divine, of the excess of *being over appearance*.<sup>23</sup>

In Lefort’s work on the political form of ‘modern society’,<sup>24</sup> *foundation as a question* is one which stems from the ‘*mise en forme*’ of the social that accompanies the ‘democratic adventure’. For Lefort the advent of the democratic adventure must be seen foremost as a new form of the social, a new ‘*mise en forme*’ of the social leading to a new, symbolic ordering of social relations. The advent of democracy then is a ‘symbolic mutation’<sup>25</sup> rather than simply an institutional transformation. With ‘symbolic mutation’ Lefort raises a particular view of the symbolic which must

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<sup>21</sup> Claude Lefort and Marcel Gauchet, ‘Sur la démocratie: le politique et l’institution du social’, *Textures* no. 3 (1971), 11. Lefort also uses the term ‘originary division’ which plays the same role as ‘originary decision’ in his thinking.

<sup>22</sup> Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, 229.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>24</sup> There are for Lefort two predominant forms of modern society, the democratic and the totalitarian.

<sup>25</sup> Claude Lefort, *Essais sur le politique XIXe-XXe siècles* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1986), 26.

be distinguished from symbolism to the extent that the latter often refers to symbols representing an existing positive real. According to John Thompson, a symbolic order refers to a 'general logic'<sup>26</sup> through which a form of society 'proposes' to represent itself. The symbolic order is that through which the world is given.<sup>27</sup> An understanding of the world can only be given through a symbolic order to the extent that the social can only represent itself symbolically. This means that the symbolic order is something which is in a sense 'always already present' while also remaining contingent.<sup>28</sup> Within this context, our definition of symbolic order follows that of Marc Richir. He writes:

Nous entendons par *institution symbolique*, dans sa plus grande généralité l'ensemble, qui a sa cohérence, des «systèmes» symboliques (langues, pratiques, représentations) qui «quadrillent» l'être, l'agir et le penser des hommes. C'est ce qui fait, chaque fois, qu'une humanité (une société) *tient ensemble* et *se reconnaît*. [...] elle paraît, *se donner*, toujours déjà, *en l'absence de son origine*, comme détermination de l'être, de l'agir et du penser *sans motivation apparente*.<sup>29</sup>

It is within this context that Lefort seeks to place the full significance of the democratic adventure in its symbolic mutation in contrast with the particular symbolic order that preceded it, that of the

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<sup>26</sup> John B. Thompson, 'Editor's Introduction', in Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, trans. By John B. Thompson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 20

<sup>27</sup> Or as Hughes Poltier notes: "Nous n'avons accès à nous-mêmes et à notre monde qu'en tant que nous sommes institués symboliquement dans notre identité et, par la même occasion, dans nos croyances les plus fondamentales, ces dernières restant pour la plupart largement implicites. Le corollaire de ces remarques est immédiat: loin que nous ayons prise sur le symbolique, c'est bien plutôt lui qui a prise sur nous." Hughes Poltier, *Claude Lefort: la découverte du politique* (Paris: Editions Michalon, 1997), 65.

<sup>28</sup> As Judith Butler states: "[...] the symbolic is always-already-there, but it's also always in the process of being made, and remade. It can't continue to exist without the ritualistic productions whereby it is continuously reinstalled. And it gets reinstalled through an imaginary idealization which is rendered as symbolic, as necessary and as immutable. The symbolic is the rendering immutable of given idealizations." Judith Butler, 'Gender Performance', in *A Critical Sense. Interviews with Intellectuals*, ed. Peter Osborne (London: Routledge, 1996), 118.

<sup>29</sup> See Marc Richir, *La naissance des dieux*, (Paris: Hachette Livre, 1995), fn. 2.

*Ancien Régime*.<sup>30</sup> The *Ancien Régime* instituted a symbolic form through a theological-political matrix. Power, knowledge, and law were symbolically tied to both a secular and a divine order, that is an increasingly territorially bounded ‘civil society’, and an “unconditional, other-worldly pole”<sup>31</sup> articulated through the king’s two bodies.

Le prince était un médiateur entre les hommes et les dieux, ou bien sous l’effet de la sécularisation et de la laïcisation de l’activité politique, un médiateur entre les hommes et ces instances transcendantes que figuraient la souveraine Justice et la souveraine Raison. Assujetti à la loi et au-dessus des lois, il condensait dans son corps, à la fois mortel et immortel, le principe de la génération et de l’ordre du royaume. Son pouvoir faisait signe vers un pôle inconditionné, extramondain, en même temps qu’il se faisait, dans sa personne, le garant et le représentant de l’unité du royaume. Celui-ci se voyait lui-même figurer comme un corps, comme une unité substantielle, de telle sorte que la hiérarchie de ses membres, la distinction des rangs et des ordres paraissait reposer sur un *fondement inconditionné*.<sup>32</sup>

Here, foundation is established by means of the symbolic order in which the imagery of the social is associated with the sovereign’s ‘two bodies’, the mortal and immortal. As Ernst Kantorowicz has shown through his work on medieval political theology, the complex interplay between the immortal and mortal bodies of the sovereign lays unconditional foundation through a theological-political matrix.<sup>33</sup> For Kantorowicz, the medieval discourses on justice and reason within secular law for instance, are unconditional because they are tied to a symbolic order which attempts to anchor itself on some “firm celestial ground”. As such,

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<sup>30</sup> An in-depth reading of the political dimensions of the ‘*Ancien Régime*’ or of the monarchical form is beyond the breadth of this chapter. Rather my intent is to use latter as a point of reference to construct a view of what is instituted symbolically within the modern political form, in particular the democratic form.

<sup>31</sup> Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, 17.

<sup>32</sup> Lefort, *Essais sur le politique*, 26.

<sup>33</sup> Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies, A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

[...] legal speculations were related to theological thought, or, to be more specific, to the mediaeval concept of the king's *character angelicus*. The body politic of kingship appears as a likeness of the 'holy sprites and angels,' because it represents, like the angels, the Immutable within Time.<sup>34</sup>

For Kantorwicz as well as for Lefort, the image of the king's two bodies through the symbolic order it engenders conditions and delimits the possible answers to the problématique of foundation. In effect, it answers this problématique by symbolically tying power, knowledge, and law to Alterity which religion sought to represent and thereby giving foundation the semblance of an unconditional exterior source.

Of course, the period of the *Ancien Régime* marks the end of the celestial grounding of the sovereign's two bodies leading to the progressive secularization of the practice of politics. It also marks the move towards the territorial state form of socio-political organization where the social is divided along public/private, inside/ outside lines as opposed to those of the secular/divine. Marcel Gauchet's work on the political history of religion shows that abandoning the celestial grounding can actually be seen as an effect of having tied foundation to this ground. Gauchet argues that by tying sovereign power to celestial ground, the monarchical political form ultimately disabled this unconditional source of its power by purporting to represent the 'unrepresentable': absolute Alterity.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the kings two bodies gives a figure to that which is supposed to remain

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>35</sup> Gauchet writes: "Le souverain cesse d'être ce qu'étaient depuis toujours les souverains: la vivante incarnation du lien entre ciel et terre, la conjonction personnifiée de l'ordre visible avec son fondement invisible. Il peut exciper de son «droit divin»: sous couvert d'une apparente continuité de langage, son rôle s'est renversé, il ne rend plus charnellement présent l'invisible, il en figure l'absence. Il ne soude plus ce monde à l'autre, il témoigne de leur séparation. Ce dont en réalité il atteste, c'est que la différence de Dieu laisse la communauté des hommes rigoureusement à elle-même." See Marcel Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde: une histoire politique de la religion* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 65. See also Gauchet's survey of Kantorowicz works. Marcel Gauchet, 'Des deux corps du roi au pouvoir sans corps: Christianisme et politique', *Le débat*, no.14 (1981), 133-157, and Marcel Gauchet, 'Des deux corps du roi au pouvoir sans corps: Christianisme et politique 2', *Le débat*, no.15 (1981), 147-168.

unfigurable and thus brings that which is to remain wholly Other, i.e., absolute Alterity, within the sphere of social contestability. The more the Sovereign sought to anchor his power to celestial ground, the more the discourse surrounding the king's two bodies gave figure to the unfigurability of absolute Alterity and in a sense unveiled itself as a discourse of this world and not that of a 'celestial' world. It is for this reason that we must speak of 'symbolic mutation', the democratic political form is contained within the monarchical symbolic form which institutes a rupture with absolute Alterity and folds the question of otherness within the social.

From this backdrop we can begin to grasp the symbolic significance of the democratic adventure. The place of power within the symbolic *mise en forme* of the social in the modern democratic form becomes *an empty place* in the sense that it cannot be occupied by any One. Symbolically the social is not consubstantiated with the image of an unconditional figure tied to an exterior source as it is within the monarchical form. Whereas the *mise en forme* of the social in the *Ancien Régime* sought to tie power, knowledge, and law to the image of the indivisible Sovereign social body through a theological-political symbolic order, the originality and significance of the symbolic order of the democratic form is the 'unfigurability' of the place of power.

En regard de ce modèle [la monarchie], se désigne le trait révolutionnaire et sans précédent de la démocratie. Le lieu du pouvoir devient un *lieu vide*. Inutile d'insister sur le détail du dispositif institutionnel. L'essentiel est qu'il interdit aux gouvernants de s'approprier, de s'incorporer le pouvoir [...]Vide, inoccupable- tel qu'aucun individu ni aucun groupe ne peut lui être consubstantiel-, le lieu du pouvoir s'avère infigurable.<sup>36</sup>

Whereas the political form of the *Ancien Régime* sought to tie power to the image of the nondivisible Sovereign social body through a theological-political symbolic order, the originality

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<sup>36</sup> Lefort, *Essais sur le politique*, 27.

and significance of the symbolic order of the democratic form is the 'unfigurability' of the place of power. This is not to say that there are not those within a social space that cannot monopolise the 'mechanisms' of power or benefit from a hegemonic discourse. The essential point is that so long as the place of power remains unfigurable no agency can consubstantiate itself with power. For Lefort, the imagery of the body within the monarchical political form appears to give the social space a nondivisibility, a clear figure capable of establishing the boundaries and the components of the social from which power, knowledge and law can be known. It gives the image of unity and of order from which the social is able to 'know itself'. And this self portrait appears to be given from an exterior source, an unconditional other-worldly pole which is articulated through the imagery of the sovereign's two bodies.

The democratic form, however, lacks such a symbolic figure. Thus, Lefort contends that those who see the image of the 'People' as the new Sovereign figure fail to grasp the significance of the mutation. The moment at which such a social body would be called upon to manifest itself, that is during periodic voting, the figure of the people must be disembodied.<sup>37</sup> The People cannot vote as One and this impossibility ruptures the image of nondivisibility, a reapture which is instituted as periodic.<sup>38</sup> It is within this context that the symbolic order of the democratic

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<sup>37</sup> Lefort writes: "C'est précisément au moment où la souveraineté populaire est censée se manifester, le peuple s'actualiser en exprimant sa volonté, que les solidarités sociales sont défaits, que le citoyen se voit extrait de tous les réseaux dans lesquels se développe la vie sociale pour être converti en unité de compte. Le nombre se substitue à la substance." Ibid., 28-29.

<sup>38</sup> Totalitarianism can be seen as the attempt to reinstate the image of an nondivisible social body within a modern socio-political context. This is done through the phantasy of the 'People-as-One' as articulated by the one party- state system and the exteriorisation of the Other. However, the image of the 'People-as-One' is not tied to an exterior source. On the contrary, there is an attempt to ground this image within the social. The fact that the reported results of voting for the party within totalitarian regimes was always extremely high is indicative of the attempt to convey to image of nondivisibility. See Claude Lefort, *L'invention démocratique: les limites de la domination totalitaire* (Paris: Fayard, 1981), 159-176.

form confronts the social with its own impossibility as a unity. The image of unity is ruptured with the democratic form since no One can give it figure. The *'mise en forme'* of the social leaves open the question of Alterity through which unity could be mediated. Whereas the symbolic order of the monarchical form dealt with the question of Alterity by establishing a division between the image of a unified social body on the one hand and Alterity in the form of a divine on the other, with the unfigurability of the place of power, the democratic symbolic order leaves open the question of Alterity. Social division is lodged *within* the social since it is no longer mediated by a symbolic order that gives social division a celestial grounding through the figure of the 'king's two bodies'. Social division is left unfigured insofar as the democratic symbolic order is marked by an absence, by the empty place of power. Thus, symbolically social division cannot be overcome since there can be no unconditional rendering of social unity. Consequently, as Laclau has shown, the social is confronted with its own impossibility to constitute itself as an object since division, or in his words antagonism, subverts a final 'suture' that would close off the "infinite of the social" opened by the democratic symbolic order.<sup>39</sup>

This is not to say that other signifiers, or what William Connolly has called "elements of political imagination",<sup>40</sup> are not invoked as foundation for social unity within modern forms of society. On the contrary, as Benedict Anderson has shown through his writings on nationalism, the strength of the idea of nation, for instance, has been undoubtedly successful in conveying a powerful image of unity.<sup>41</sup> But with the unfigurability of the place of power such images are not tied to an

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<sup>39</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (New York: Verso, 1990), 89-92.

<sup>40</sup> William E. Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 135.

<sup>41</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).

exterior pole. They are anchored *within* the social space and their particular (his)tory<sup>42</sup> and therefore lack the symbolic unconditionality of a celestial grounding. The ‘nation’ as Anderson argues, must be imagined, and yet it cannot be imagined by all at the same time in the same manner. In other words, the ‘imagined community’ cannot be unconditional. It is historically and spatially specific. Indeed, for Lefort, the rupture of a symbolic order anchored to some firm celestial ground inaugurates the ‘historical society’, and the idea of ‘nation’ beautifully illustrates this.

Paradoxically, it is because it is a historical entity that the nation eludes the religious imagination, which always tries to establish a narrative, to master a time that exists outside time. *Whilst the nation bestows a collective identity, it is at the same time implicated in that identity.*<sup>43</sup>

Since the symbolic order of the democratic form institutes the unfigurability of power as a condition of its possibility, there is no symbolic unconditional other-worldly pole from which a unity could be decided and this includes history. There is no other place to which foundation can be anchored. In Lefort’s words, “*le lieu autre est vide*”, the other place to which power, knowledge, and law was symbolically anchored within the monarchical order is emptied of figure. Power,

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<sup>42</sup> If as Anderson points out “[n]o more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers”, then the history of the ‘nation’ as the history of its predominantly male soldiers is overwhelmingly gender specific. Ibid., 9. As a gendered space, the register of history is thus predominately *his* story. If the history of nation is gender specific, than it cannot be unconditional. In terms of history as a gendered ‘rhetorical space’ see Lorraine Code, *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 107. It is important to note that the Greek etymology of history, *historein*, meaning to narrate, does not reproduce the gender specific reading of the term I am proposing here. However, the predominant narration of the history of the nation remains gendered masculine. This highlights the political foundation of the nation’s history insofar as the latter reproduces a story which tends to exclude in its images women and other members of the nation.

<sup>43</sup> Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, 232 (emphasis added). As Lefort states, the historical society is a form of society which experiences “the real as history”. Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 185. The nation and its potential for exclusionary forms of nationalistic impulses is a poignant illustration of the underlying tension that is constitutive of the democratic adventure. This tension can be seen as the fine line that demarcates the democratic from the totalitarian insofar as the nation contains or deploys the totalitarian impulse of reincorporating the social as a body, a unified whole which can be seen as an attempt to re-suture the social in face of the uncertainty and indeterminacy of the unfigurability of the place of power instituted by the democratic adventure. In a sense, totalitarianism is the ugly skeleton in democracy’s closet.

knowledge, and law are no longer subsumed under the same head(ing). Indeed, following Campbell and Dillon, the Lefortian view of democracy institutes a symbolic order which renders a ‘acephalous’ image of the social, without a head or a tail, without a beginning (an unconditional history or immemorial narrative) or an end (a final threshold).<sup>44</sup> It is for this reason that Lefort sees the democratic form as truly an adventure inasmuch as it institutes as a condition of its own possibility its symbolic unfigurability by emptying the place of power. Consequently, there is no unconditional image the social can give of itself. On the contrary, the symbolic order of the democratic form institutes the impossibility of such an image consubstantiating itself with the place of power. This leaves the social as if it were open ended or always incomplete since no ‘One’ can say with unconditioned certainty what the social is. A radical social indeterminacy is installed since all ‘markers of certainty’ claiming foundation can ‘dissolve’.

L’essentiel, à mes yeux, est que la démocratie s’institue et se maintient dans la *dissolution des repères de la certitude*. Elle inaugure une histoire dans laquelle les hommes font l’épreuve d’une indétermination dernière, quant au fondement du Pouvoir, de la Loi et du Savoir, et au fondement de la relation de l’un avec l’autre, sur tous les registres de la vie sociale (partout où la division s’énonçait autrefois, notamment la division entre les détenteurs de l’autorité et ceux qui leur étaient assujettis, en fonction de croyances en une nature des choses ou en un principe surnaturel). C’est ce qui m’incite à juger que se déploie dans la pratique sociale, à l’insu des acteurs, une interrogation dont nul ne saurait détenir la réponse et à laquelle le travail de l’idéologie, vouée toujours à restituer de la certitude, ne parvient pas à mettre un terme.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the symbolic emptiness of the place of power prohibits the social from giving itself an unconditioned figure, and by so doing institutes *social division*, or what Laclau and Mouffe prefer

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<sup>44</sup> Campbell and Dillon, ‘The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations’, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Lefort, *Essais sur le politique*, 29

to call social antagonism,<sup>46</sup> *within the sphere of the social*. Division *within* the social space is a fixture of the symbolic order instituted by the unfigurability of the place of power. Of course social division exists within the monarchical form. However, this division was given a figure ordained from an elsewhere which symbolically gave the appearance of pre-ordering within the social the relation of the ‘*self*’ with the ‘*other*’. As Lefort points out in the previous quote, with the democratic adventure the question of the relation between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ *remains entirely open* inasmuch as it is not pre-given and is not answered unconditionally. In other words, social division remains symbolically undetermined as opposed to being hierarchically preordered and tied to an unconditional other-worldly pole. I will return to the notion of social division in the following section.

With the unfigurability of the place of power lies the unparalleled significance for the question of foundation that is opened by the symbolic mutation of the democratic adventure. Because power is tied to an empty place, because power is unfigurable, and because this is a fixture, a condition of possibility of the symbolic order of the democratic adventure, there is an opening of the question of foundation which cannot be closed. No *One* can say what the social is since in a sense every one is capable of doing so. The ‘markers of certainty’ (*‘les repères de la certitude’*) deployed by any discourse on the social purporting to give a definite answer to the question of foundation can ‘dissolve’, can be shown to be unfounded, arbitrary, historically and spatially specific and ultimately political. Any such discourse cannot consubstantiate itself with the place of power since power is symbolically tied to a place which remains innocupable. The symbolic order

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<sup>46</sup> Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).

of democracy, Lefort argues, inaugurates a social “experience in which society is constantly in search of its own foundation.”<sup>47</sup> The democratic adventure institutes as a condition of its own possibility the question of foundation and the impossibility to give an irrevocable answer to that question. *It is the social experience of the impossibility of foundation.* And yet, the crucial point is that foundation is not eliminated. On the contrary, the very question of foundation is placed at the heart of the symbolic order: the social through its symbolic order is marked by the questioning of foundation though it is impossible to give a definite answer. However, claiming foundation as presence, as some essence which can be identified and defined, is disabled by the symbolic ‘*mise en forme*’ of the social. The ‘markers of certainty’, in whatever form, cannot withstand the symbolic order of the democratic adventure since those markers cannot tie themselves to the empty place of power. From a Lefortian view of democracy, we can see foundation as the social experience of an absence, a void which cannot be filled. The unfigurability of the place of power at the level of the symbolic is a defining component of this experience.

My contention is that the significance of the democratic adventure seen as a symbolic mutation which institutes the unfigurability of the place of power surpasses the social spaces which are commonly understood to be ‘democratic’. In other words, what Lefort articulates has implications far beyond the social space of, for example, a United States of America or the political trajectory of Western Europe. As such, democracy as it is understood here goes beyond both the positive reading of democracy found within liberalism as well as its negative counterpart found

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<sup>47</sup> Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, 229.

within the traditional Marxist view of democracy as the instrument of bourgeois individualism.<sup>48</sup> What Lefort enables us to grasp when speaking of democracy as a new '*mise en forme*' of the social is the broader moment which distinguishes the modern from the premodern forms of social being and how these are symbolically ordered in regards to their relation to Alterity. Democracy is therefore not only an ontological commitment (i.e., a particular view of the world), it is also an epistemological condition (i.e., a metaphysical of absence) which informs power, knowledge, and law. This epistemological condition is one which is marked by absence not presence. Thus, Lefort gives us an understanding of democracy which allows us to separate it from its association with capitalism and liberalism by placing the democratic adventure at the level of the symbolic.

Following Mouffe, I would further argue that a proper political definition of modernity and postmodernity as well as the relation between the two must be articulated through an understanding of the Lefortian view of democracy understood as the symbolic unfigurability of the place of power.<sup>49</sup> If modern philosophy is an attempt to establish foundation *within the social* through the metaphysics of presence, i.e, either through an inborn 'human nature' or inherent ability

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<sup>48</sup> More recent critiques of democracy can be found within post-colonialism. For authors such as Amarpal K. Dhaliwal, both liberal and radical democratic theories redeploy a conception of citizen, race as well as other subject categories which reinforce Western hegemony over other cultural formations. Even the radical democracy proposed by Mouffe is not except from this hegemonizing effect. See Amarpal K. Dhaliwal, 'Can the Subaltern Vote? Radical Democracy, Discourses of Representation and Rights, and Questions of Race', in *Radical Democracy. Identity, Citizenship, and the State*, ed. David Trend (New York: Routledge, 1996), 42-61. Although these critiques are often valid in their characterization of the marginalization and exclusion that democracy and its principles entail, they fail in my mind to distinguish between democracy as an ontology constructed historically and spatially, and democracy as an epistemological condition which Lefort enables us to think.

<sup>49</sup> The parallel that I draw here between Lefortian democracy and the 'postmodern' moment is also found in David Campbell's assessment of Lefort's work, provided we accept that 'deconstruction' is an intellectual project occurring within 'postmodernity'. Campbell writes, "Lefort's reading of democracy [...] highlights the radical indeterminacy, akin to deconstructive thought, that is at democracy's heart and is its most politically original feature." David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 196.

to 'reason', then the impossibility of anchoring foundation to an unconditional pole exterior to the social is the symbolic context for this attempt. In other words, as Lefort highlights with his contrast between the '*Ancien Régime*' and the democratic adventure, the movement from anchoring foundation to a pure transcendence, i.e., 'God', to pure immanence, i.e., 'Man' occurs within a symbolic order which has ruptured the theologico-political matrix through which foundation can be constructed.<sup>50</sup> And if postmodern philosophy is an attempt to articulate "the impossibility of any ultimate foundation or final legitimation"<sup>51</sup> then once again the democratic mutation is the symbolic order which enables at a societal level such an attempt inasmuch as the latter institutes as a condition of its own possibility the impossibility of giving unconditional foundation to the social. As Critchley notes, a Lefortian understanding of "[d]emocracy instals a metaphysical agnosticism or perhaps even a metaphysics of absence at the heart of political life."<sup>52</sup> The symbolic order which institutes the unfigurability of the place of power *is the context* or the symbolic '*mise en forme*' of the social in which the foundationist/ anti-foundationist debate can occur. It is also the context from which we must begin thinking the question of foundation, and this context leads to thinking the latter as conditioned by an absence, i.e., an inaccessible '*lieu autre*' figured symbolically by the

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<sup>50</sup> Following Mouffe and her reading of Hans Blumenberg, Wolfgang Natter suggests that by seeking to anchor foundation to immanence, i.e., 'Man', 'Reason', modern foundationalism can be understood in part as a strategic attempt to counter foundation as pure transcendence, i.e., 'God'. Thus, foundation anchored within immanence is the strategically most logical position to counter a form of foundation anchored to transcendence. What this suggest is that modern foundationalism is to be understood less for its truth-value than for its political move to oppose that which it seeks to negate. See Chantal Mouffe, 'Post-Marxism: Democracy and Identity', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13, no. 3 (1995), 259-60. Wolfgang Natter, 'Radical Democracy: Hegemony, Reason, Time and Space', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13, no.3 (1995), 270-71. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

<sup>51</sup> Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), 11-12.

<sup>52</sup> Simon Critchley, 'Re-tracing the Political: Politics and Community in the Work of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy', in *The Political Subject of Violence*, eds. Campbell and Dillon, 80.

empty place of power.

The significance of above reading of democracy as an epistemological condition which installs through the symbolic ordering of social relations a metaphysics of absence as a condition of human being is that it allows us to contextualize the question of foundation. This contextualisation enables us to view foundation as caught within its own impossibility. It is caught within its own impossibility because, as we have seen within the symbolic order of democracy, foundation is always already subverted by the political insofar as it will always remain contingent. In this sense, our contextualisation of the question of foundation has brought us directly to the political. However, before we can move on to defining more clearly the political within the context of a metaphysics of absence, we must first revisit two important consequences of the democratic symbolic order. As we will see these consequences mark the political and must be taken into account in its definition. The first of these is how one can place the experience of the 'aporia' explored by Derrida in the context of Lefortian democracy. Within the '*mise en forme*' of the democratic adventure, political statements never manage to close the aporia. The second consequence is how social division or antagonism becomes an unsurmountable condition of social relations.

***The aporia: the play between foundation and the political***

One of the means by which Derrida illustrates more directly and succinctly his understanding of the aporia is through his reading of the American Declaration of Independence. Of the Declaration, Derrida asks: In what authority or in who's name, is this founding document

signed?<sup>54</sup> Is it Thomas Jefferson, chief drafter of the declaration who gives this founding document authority? No. Although Jefferson signs in *principle*, in *fact* he is the representative of the representatives. Is it the representatives? No. They sign in *fact*, but in *principle* the representatives sign for the people. Is it the people who give authority to the declaration? Yes, but the people do not exist, not in *principle*, before the act of signing.<sup>55</sup> As Derrida notes, the signature invents the people. “La signature invente le signataire. Celui-ci ne peut s’autoriser à signer qu’une fois parvenu au bout, si on peut dire, de sa signature et dans une sorte de rétroactivité fabuleuse.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, as Bonnie Honig points out, for Derrida “the signers are stuck in Sièyes’s vicious circle. They lack the authority to sign until they have already signed.”<sup>57</sup> This is the *aporia* in which the declaration is caught.<sup>58</sup> *Aporia*, which comes from the Greek term *aporos* meaning ‘without passage’ or ‘without issue’,<sup>59</sup> functions as a void that cannot be filled by text but which at the same time conditions all text and requires a resolution. There must be a decision made as to what is the basis of authority of the document,

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<sup>54</sup> See Jacques Derrida, *Otobiographies: l’enseignement de Nietzsche et la politique du nom propre* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1984), 16.

<sup>55</sup> Derrida writes: “Or ce peuple n’existe pas. Il n’existe *pas avant* cette déclaration, *pas comme tel*.” Ibid., 21.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 22. In his remarks on the American and French declarations, Lefort develops a similar understanding of these founding documents, albeit in a different language: “Celles-ci, en ramenant la source du droit à l’énonciation humaine du droit, faisaient de l’homme et du droit une énigme.[...] Ou, en d’autres termes, la conception naturaliste du droit a masqué l’extraordinaire événement que constituait une déclaration qui était une autodéclaration, c’est-à-dire une déclaration dans laquelle les hommes, à travers leurs représentants, s’avéraient être simultanément les sujets et les objets de l’énonciation [...]” Lefort, *Essais sur le politique*, 51.

<sup>57</sup> Bonnie Honig, ‘Declarations of Independence: Arendt and Derrida on the Problem of Founding a Republic’, *American Political Science Review*, 85, no.1 (1991), 104-105.

<sup>58</sup> As Richard Beardsworth notes, the term ‘*aporia*’ is one which can be seen as “organiz[ing] in concentrated form the overall concerns of deconstruction, both its conceptual strategies and its understanding of tradition and the future.” Richard Beardsworth, *Derrida and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1996), 31. As such, the term as it appears in Derrida’s work has a much broader depth than the one I render in this section. To do it proper justice would require a thesis in itself.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 32.

otherwise the document cannot be written. It is a practical problem which must be dealt with. As such, the aporia is not just a fanciful and dense academic notion. As noted by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak “[a] dilemma is just task of thinking, whereas an aporia is a practical fact. An aporia is a situation where one choice cancels out another, but a choice must be made. You can’t exist in an aporia.”<sup>60</sup> As such, the aporia is an ‘irreducible’ condition of the text.<sup>61</sup> For Derrida, the only way out the impasse produced by the aporia is through a ‘*coup de force*’, i.e., the attempt to arrest the undecidability of the founding authority of the political statement. As Honig notes:

The moral of Derrida’s story is that no act of founding (or signing, or promising) is free of this *aporia*- this gap that needs to be anchored- and this is a structural feature of language. This gap that marks *all* forms of utterance is always filled (whether or not we acknowledge it) by a *deus ex machina*- if not by God himself, then by nature, the subject, language, or tradition.<sup>62</sup>

For Derrida, all forms of utterance or statements are caught within an aporia because all statements are at once *performatives* and *constatives*.<sup>63</sup> In other words, by the end of each performative statement (that it is the people who are the founding authority), a constative has been uttered (the people), and constatives (the people) can only be uttered through a performative (the enunciation that the people are the founding authority). Thus, any attempt to resolve whether or not an utterance is a performative or a constative is caught in an inherent ‘undecidability’. The aporia *forces* a decision between the performative/ constative play of an utterance, and that decision involves a

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<sup>60</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and David Plotke, ‘A Dialogue on Democracy’, in *Radical Democracy*, ed. Trend, 211.

<sup>61</sup> Beardsworth, *Derrida and the Political*, 33.

<sup>62</sup> Honig, ‘Declarations of Independence’, 105.

<sup>63</sup> Honig attributes the terms performative and constative to John Austin. See John L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). A Performative normally refers to an utterance which constitutes the act implied by the verb (for example, ‘I promise I will tell you.’) A constative normally appears as a statement affirming a pre-existing fact (for example, ‘It is raining outside’).

violent '*coup de force*' which invokes a device (traditionally 'God', 'Law', 'History', 'Man', 'Reason') to resolve the undecidability. Derrida writes:

Or l'opération qui revient à fonder, à inaugurer, à justifier le droit, à *faire la loi*, consisterait en un coup de force, en une violence performative et donc interprétative qui en elle-même n'est ni juste ni injuste et qu'aucune justice, aucun droit préalable et antérieurement fondateur, aucune fondation préexistante, par définition, ne pourrait ni garantir ni contredire ou invalider.<sup>64</sup>

Placed within the context of a Lefortian understanding of democracy no '*coup de force*' is capable of arresting indefinitely the aporia since such a deus ex machina cannot tie itself to an empty place of power. On the contrary, the democratic symbolic order provides the condition which allows us to see such a forced resolution of the authority of a statement for what it is: a '*coup de force*'. All markers of certainty can dissolve, shown to be unfounded, arbitrary and thereby deconstructed. This understanding of the aporia thus brings us back to a metaphysics of absence as the condition of modern human being insofar as the aporia points towards an absence constitutive of text. What is absent from the text or founding statement is an unpolitical centre which would be capable of inaugurating the text and giving it an unpolitical authority. As Jacob Torfing notes, "[...] with the emphasis on the structural undecidability of the social [i.e., the aporia], it is no longer possible to maintain the idea that politics is derived from something which is not itself political. Thus, if the ground of politics is revealed as a bottomless abyss, the decision becomes its ground."<sup>65</sup> The '*coup de force*' needed to arrest the performative/ constative play of the founding statement cannot be unpolitical within the symbolic order of democracy. From here, we can view the aporia as the condition in which the political and foundation find themselves, and this condition explains the

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<sup>64</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Force de loi: Le «Fondement mystique de l'autorité»* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 32-33.

<sup>65</sup> Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau Mouffe and Žižek* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 70.

relationship between the two. The political, understood as a performative statement, relies on a constative, a foundational statement. And yet, that same foundational statement, i.e., the constative, can only 'exist' through the performative, i.e., the political, through which it is uttered. In this sense, the political subverts the foundational statement's attempt at laying unconditional ground or its claim to be a constative. Thus, within the context of the *aporia* both the political and foundation are always brought back to each other. We are thus brought back to the position with which I approached the debate on foundation within IT. Foundation is caught within the condition of its own impossibility since all foundational statements are subverted by their political performativity when confronted by the *aporia*. There is no absolute presence of foundation upon which *subsequently* the political would take place since any such foundation is subverted by its own political performativity, or in Derrida's words, its own violent '*coup de force*' which can be deconstructed, shown to be arbitrary within a symbolic order which has disarmed the possibility of unconditional foundation. And yet, foundation is not eliminated as a condition of the social since the political is precisely the performative attempt at laying foundational ground, the attempt at arresting the *aporia*.<sup>66</sup> As an inescapable condition of the text the *aporia* forces a resolution of the question of foundation, but at the same time is the condition which unveils the arbitrariness of this forced resolution.

Before moving on to the notion of social division one last feature of the *aporia* of significance for our purposes should be highlighted. The insensate interplay between the political and foundation which stems from the *aporia* (performative/ constative) raises the element of

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<sup>66</sup> Within IT, Campbell offers a similar conception of the political in his reading of the notion of *aporia* in Derrida's work which for the latter is the irreducible mark of discourse. The *aporia* is an "undecidable and ungrounded political space". It is precisely because of the *aporetic* quality of discourse that the political can be understood as the attempt at foundation. The political is the attempt at arresting the *aporia*. See David Campbell, 'The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics After the End of Philosophy', *Alternatives* 19, no. 4 (1994), 475.

‘retroactivity’ in foundation that Derrida identifies in the earlier quote as an effect of the ‘signature’. ‘La signature invente le signataire’ says Derrida, adding ‘Celui-ci ne peut s’ autoriser à signer qu’ une fois parvenu au bout, si on peut dire, de sa signature et dans une sorte de *rétroactivité fabuleuse*.’ Because the constative upon which the signature is based *can only come after* the performative act of signing, foundation can only be instituted *retroactively*. The illusion of historical depth to foundation is thus an effect of the constant reiteration of foundation through the performative. If we take the terms sovereignty/ anarchy, for instance, the claim to their historical legacy within state centric IT is an effect of its reiteration rather than some prior foundational ground. In other words, sovereignty and anarchy gain their status as an historical reality of international relations because their constant reiteration performatively reproduces this historical depth. Sovereignty/ anarchy retroactively produce their own ‘fable’, (‘une rétroactivité fabuleuse’ says Derrida). Thus, the depth is produced retroactively. Writing on feminism, Judith Butler nicely illustrates the Derridian notion of retroactivity.

[...] the term that claims to represent a prior reality produces retroactively that priority as an effect of its own operation and [...] every determined structure gains its determination by repetition and, hence, a contingency that puts at risk the determined character of that structure. For feminism, that means that gender does not represent an interior depth, *but produces that interiority and depth performatively as an effect of its own operation*. And it means that “patriarchy” or “systems” of masculine domination are not systemic totalities bound to keep women in positions of oppression, but rather, hegemonic forms of power that expose their own frailty in the very operation of their iterability.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, the illusion of historical depth to foundation does not stem from the fact that historically that foundation was ‘present’. Rather, the depth comes from performatively restating it in the present

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<sup>67</sup> See Judith Butler, ‘Further Reflections on Conversations of Our Time’, *Diacritics*, 27, no.1 (1997), 14 (emphasis added).

which opens it to rearticulation.

***The irreducibility of social division: the impossibility of closure***

In the discussion on the democratic adventure, I argued that the transition from the monarchical to the democratic political form can be seen as symbolic transformation which has the effect of lodging social division *within social space*. As Lefort states, “division is, in a general way, constitutive of the very unity of society” within the democratic symbolic order.<sup>68</sup> Social division becomes lateral or flat and leaves undetermined the relation of the ‘self’ to the ‘other’. In other words, the relation of the ‘self’ to the ‘other’ is not mediated by an unconditional exterior pole which can fix the relation and its meaning. This social division to which Lefort refers to is one which is irreducible. Thus, it is not some form of social division which is meant to disappear through the revolutionary instituting of the classless society or better yet the victory of a Fukuyamian liberal market democracy. Both of these understandings of social division see the latter as ultimately stemming from a transitory socio-political situation which is merely masking an underlying true reality of the social represented as a whole. As such, within the orthodox Marxist tradition, forces of production within capitalism will eventually outpace relations of production leading to unsustainable social contradictions and dislocations ultimately unleashing the revolutionary forces for the classless society. Or, within liberalism *à la* Fukuyama, liberal market democracy is the final synthesis of a universal historical trajectory bringing about the ‘End of history’ capable of reconciling social divisions. In contradistinction, thinking the irreducibility of

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<sup>68</sup> Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, 18.

social division means an attempt to articulate a form of social division which cannot be surmounted.

Those who have theorized most thoroughly the question of social division within the democratic symbolic order is undoubtedly Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe although they prefer the term *social antagonism* to that of social division.<sup>69</sup> I do not intend to render the entire scope and depth of what is developed by Laclau and Mouffe in their seminal book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.<sup>70</sup> However, the two components of their work that will be examined below, namely the notion of *subject position* and of *social antagonism*, do traverse their whole argumentation.

In order to properly apprehend what is meant by antagonism in Laclau and Mouffe's work one must first briefly explore their understanding of the notion of subject position which I will examine again in greater depth in Chapter Four. Laclau and Mouffe approach the category of the subject from a non-essentialist or non-deterministic perspective breaking with the modernist conception of the subject as a sovereign self-present individual. Thus, the theorizing that I am proposing seeks to move away from a modernist 'metaphysics of presence' from which identity was viewed "as a rational transparent entity which could convey a homogeneous meaning on the total field of her conduct by being the source of her actions."<sup>71</sup> The subject, therefore, is not seen as a self defined agent capable of acting rationally or otherwise upon a given reality. The subject is not a positive reality. Subjectivity is *discursively constructed*. I will explore in more detail the authors'

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<sup>69</sup> In fact, Laclau and Mouffe often use both terms. See Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 193.

<sup>70</sup> A scope and depth which has lead one notable proponent to comment that "[...] this book presents perhaps the most radical breakthrough in modern social theory." See Slavoj Žižek, 'Beyond Discourse-Analysis', in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, Ernesto Laclau (New York: Verso, 1990), 249. For a clear and succinct overview of Laclau and Mouffe's project see in particular Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*, Anna Maria Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 1998), and Michèle Barrett, 'Ideology, Politics, Hegemony: From Gramsci to Laclau and Mouffe' in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, (New York: Verso, 1994), 235-264.

<sup>71</sup> Mouffe, 'Post-Marxism: Democracy and Identity', 260.

understanding of discursivity in the last section of this chapter. Suffice it to say for now that they reject the “distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices.” As such “every object is constituted as an object of discourse, insofar as no object is given outside every discursive condition of emergence” and this includes the construction of the subject’s identity.<sup>72</sup> Consequently, there are not ‘two planes’, one of discursivity and one of materiality since the latter can only be known through discourse. Within this context, the meaning assigned to the material world is constructed discursively and it is only through discourse that any material reality can be known.

Seen that subjectivity cannot be given by itself or ordained from an elsewhere, it must be seen *relationally*. Partly inspired by Saussurian linguistics, subjectivity for Laclau and Mouffe is only knowable in terms of its relation to others and as such can only be known in terms of its position vis-à-vis others. Consequently, the meaning or the identity of a subject position is constructed through its differential relationship with others within a discursive formation.<sup>73</sup> This understanding of subjectivity prohibits arresting the meaning that is carried along with identity since it is always constituted relationally and those relations can never be fixed. It is for this reason that Laclau and Mouffe use the term *subject position*.<sup>74</sup> How the identity of a subject is defined will

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<sup>72</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 107.

<sup>73</sup> Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe*, 87.

<sup>74</sup> Smith has introduced an added dimension to the notion of subject position by distinguishing it from ‘structural position’. Smith writes: “[...] an individual is structurally positioned within hierarchical social, cultural, political and economic systems by forces and institutions that are prior to her will. [...] one finds oneself ‘always already’ positioned by forces and institutions within a discursive field that is never wholly of our choosing.” She later adds that: “[...] the way that she lives in her structural positions and responds to them [...] is shaped not by the mere fact of the structural positions themselves, but by the subject positions through which she lives her structural position.” Ibid., 56-57 and 58. Of course, the understanding that a subject position is not merely open ended in its relation to others is well developed in Laclau and Mouffe. This is what the authors mean when they speak of hegemonic articulations between subject positions. There are, in other words, dominant meanings assigned to subject positions. The distinction added by Smith does however, enable us to make this point more clearly.

depend on how the latter is articulated in its position with others which are themselves only knowable in their relation with others. What enables the identity of a given subject is not self-generated but given through its subject position, i.e., its relation with other subject positions. All subject positions are determined by the 'other' and thus marked by a *constitutive outside* to themselves.<sup>75</sup> Within this context, the 'other' is *constitutive* of identity formation and not merely a symbol of difference from which identity can define itself.

By stressing the fact that the outside is constitutive, it reveals the impossibility of drawing an absolute distinction between interior and exterior. The existence of the other becomes a condition of the possibility of my identity since, without the other, I could not have an identity. Therefore, every identity is irremediably destabilized by its exterior and the interior appears as something always contingent. [...] Inasmuch as objectivity always depends on an absent otherness, it is always necessarily echoed and contaminated by this otherness.<sup>76</sup>

In other words, there is always an excess of meaning to each subject position which prohibits closure and self-formation or self-generation. This understanding of the construction of identity formation gives us a more profound view of the implications of what Lefort means when he says that the emptying of the place of power lodges social division within the social and leaves entirely open the relation of the 'self' to the 'other'. In its relation to otherness, identity formation within the democratic symbolic order becomes 'flat' or 'lateral' insofar as it is only knowable in its relation to other subject positions *within the social*. For Laclau and Mouffe the underdetermined character of subjectivity is what leads to the need to create articulations between various subject positions. It is only through an articulation with other subject positions that a particular subjectivity can appear to

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<sup>75</sup> In 'Hegemony and Socialist Strategy' Laclau and Mouffe use the term 'overdetermination' which seems to have the same definition as 'constitutive outside' which is used later in both of their own writings. On a definition of overdetermination see Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*, 303.

<sup>76</sup> Mouffe, 'Post-Marxism: Democracy and Identity', 264.

have a fixed identity since it is its articulation with multiple others which gives it meaning.

Of course, the notion of relationality and of constitutive outside works at other levels of identity formation aside from 'human subjectivity'. Within the context of IT, both David Campbell and Richard Ashley's work can be seen as following the logic of these notions.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Campbell's work on foreign policy as the needed practice of 'making foreign' within an interstate world gives us a reading of identity formation at the state-national/ international level through an understanding of subject position very much akin to the contention that identity is marked by a constitutive outside. The need for the state to create a 'discourse of danger' as marking the fundamental characteristic of the 'outside' world of international relations is related to the need to construct a secure identity for the 'national self'.<sup>78</sup> The dangerous outside world functions as the constitutive outside of the national self. It is one of the national self's 'others'. Campbell writes:

The state- emerging as the ground of identity- achieves its form through discourses of danger that rely on strategies of "otherness," or practices of differentiation. Through the disciplining consequences of the discourses of "danger"- warning us what to fear or how they are different- the self as "the state," is ordered. "We" come to know ourselves only by distancing and differentiating our self from theirs. The practices that make this possible, and the relationship between the self and the other that results, can be understood as "foreign policy".<sup>79</sup>

National self can only be constructed through its relation to an outside. This outside houses the

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<sup>77</sup> For a reading of the problématique of sovereignty as it relates to 'metaphysics of absence', see David Campbell, 'Political Prosaics, Transversal Politics, and the Anarchical World', in *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities*, eds. Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 7-31.

<sup>78</sup> This 'need' to create a 'dangerous outside' can be related to unfigurability of the place of power insofar as there is a corresponding impossibility of giving an unconditional image to the social. Thus, the image of unity must be constructed by creating an 'outside' from which the 'inside' can be circumscribed.

<sup>79</sup> David Campbell, 'Foreign Policy and Identity: Japanese "Other"/ American "Self"', in *The Global Political Economy as Political Space*, eds. Stephen J. Rosow, Naeen Inayatullah, and Mark Rupert (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 149-150. See also David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

‘other’ and is constitutive of the national ‘self’. Ashley’s reading of the dichotomy sovereignty/anarchy follows much of the same logic. He has argued that within this dichotomy, the latter term functions as the constitutive outside of the privileged first term, sovereignty.<sup>80</sup> In this simple dichotomy, anarchy is the constitutive outside of sovereignty inasmuch as the sovereignty of states has no meaning without anarchy within the traditional or orthodox discourse of IT. Sovereignty is *determined by* and *contingent upon* anarchy and therefore the latter term occupies the place of a constitutive outside enabling the term sovereignty to acquire its meaning. This understanding of identity formation and subject position is in effect *reversing* the work of signification. The term sovereignty is not a positive reality which would thereby be able to give material grounding to international relations among states. Rather, it is negative or empty of positive meaning which is why other terms are needed to sustain it. What gives sovereignty the appearance of fixity or ‘presence’<sup>81</sup> is the privileged articulation the term receives in IT and how this economy of terms has the effect of sustaining sovereignty, always pointing back towards sovereignty in the formulation of meaning. The crucial point for Laclau and Mouffe is that what appears as fixed or what seems as ‘present’ is merely the effect of the privileged articulation since identity remains discursively polysemic, always overdetermined by otherness and thus open to new articulatory practices even though there are dominant or hegemonic articulations which obscure this openness.

This [is] the logic of overdetermination. For it, the sense of every identity is overdetermined inasmuch as all literality appears as constitutively subverted and exceeded; far from there being an essentialist *totalization*, or no less essentialist

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<sup>80</sup> Richard K. Ashley, ‘Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 17, no. 2 (1988), 230.

<sup>81</sup> As Campbell notes by quoting Derrida, sovereignty, perhaps more than any other discursive practice of IR “is presence, and the delight in presence”. Campbell, ‘Political Prosaics, Transversal Politics, and the Anarchical World’, 17.

*separation* among objects, the presence of some objects in the others prevents any of their identities from being fixed. Objects appear articulated not like pieces in a clockwork mechanism, but because the presence of some in the others hinders the suturing of the identity of any of them.<sup>82</sup>

Anarchy becomes sovereignty's 'other' in the formulation of its subject position and it is this 'other' that both prohibits sovereignty from being a totalizing positive reality and which also sustains and informs the meaning that sovereignty carries in IT by being its primary constitutive outside.

It is from the above understanding of the category of the subject as a subject position constitutively overdetermined by the category of the 'other' that Laclau and Mouffe articulate the notion of *antagonism* around which revolves their understanding of the political. The authors begin by stating that an antagonistic relation is not a contradictory or oppositional relation. 'Contradiction' and 'opposition' are categories that rely on the belief of the existence and the possibility of separating two planes of human being, the discursive and material. Thus, in orthodox Marxism for instance, forces of production, part of a pre-discursive material world, can produce *contradictions* within relations of production when the former outpace the latter. From here, *opposition* could arise between the classes within relations of production that have been transformed by changing forces of production. Within this logic, we can imagine for example that changes in technology leading to increases in production capacities transform forces of production. Transformations in forces of production could lead to contradictions within relations of production insofar as new production capacities may reduce labour requirements. What follows is the potential for opposition within relations of production between fully constituted agencies, labour and the owners of means of production. What this illustrates is that the logic of contradiction and opposition within Marxism

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<sup>82</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 104.

stems from the pre-discursive material existence of forces of production. Changes in forces of production are part of discernable material reality and it is this reality which leads to contradictions and potential opposition between fully constituted agencies.

*Antagonism* on the other hand, brings us back to the understanding of subjectivity as a subject position examined above. For Laclau and Mouffe social antagonism comes about when the 'other' appears to be denying or negating the completion of the self's identity.

[I]n the case of antagonism, we are confronted with a different situation: the presence of the 'Other' prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but from the impossibility of their constitution. [...] Insofar as there is antagonism, I cannot be full presence for myself. But nor is the force that antagonizes me such a presence: its objective being is a symbol of my non-being and, in this way, it is overflowed by a plurality of meanings which prevent its being fixed as full positivity.<sup>83</sup>

Antagonism for Laclau and Mouffe becomes the moment of potential socio-political conflict and struggle because it is the moment at which the constitutive outside to subject formation reveals the impossibility of appropriating a complete self-enclosed identity. Antagonism is the moment at which the impossibility of closure of identity is *unveiled*.<sup>84</sup> It is understood as an unveiling because the antagonistic relation between subject positions is a potentiality contained in the fact that identity formation is marked by the 'other'. Because the category of the 'other' is *constitutive* of the self's identity, cannot be divorced from the self's identity, antagonism is always already present within identity formation. There is therefore, a correlation made between the notion of a constitutive

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>84</sup> Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, 18.

outside and antagonism. In fact, they are coterminous.<sup>85</sup> Without an outside, identity cannot be formulated, but at the same time the constitutive outside blocks identity from attaining total self-completion. This follows closely the use of Lacanian psychoanalysis in its understanding of the subjectivation where the subject is marked by a constitutive lack or dimension of ‘radical negativity’. As Žižek notes:

In this perspective [...] this dimension of radical negativity, cannot be reduced to an expression of alienated social conditions, it defines *la condition humaine* as such: there is no solution, no escape from it; the thing to do is not ‘overcome’ to ‘abolish’ it, but to come to terms with it, to learn to recognize it in its terrifying dimension and then, on the basis of this fundamental recognition, to try to articulate a *modus vivendi* with it.<sup>86</sup>

To come back to my previous remark on orthodox Marxism, antagonism for Laclau and Mouffe would not in this case stem from contradictions between forces of production and relations of production. Rather, antagonism would surface because the threat of reducing the labour force would deny workers their identities not only as workers, but also other possible identity positions such as consumers, wage earners, members of a middle class and so forth. As such, antagonism is the moment at which the impossibility of the self-engenderment of identity is revealed. My identity as a worker is revealed not to be my own but given by an ‘other’, which in the case of an antagonistic relation, is denying me my identity. It is because the self cannot be complete since that completeness is always subverted by the ‘other’, by the constitutive outside needed for identity formation, that

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<sup>85</sup> Consequently, as Torfing points out: “[...] as ‘constitutive outside’ is coterminous with ‘social antagonism’, we can conclude [...] that social antagonism is, at the same time, *the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of discursive systems of identity.*” Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*, 124 (emphasis added). The constitutive outside is the condition of possibility of a discursive system of identity because it is the only avenue for identity construction. As coterminous with social antagonism, it is also the condition of impossibility of a discursive system of identity because it negates the possibility of articulating a self-enclosed identity.

<sup>86</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 5.

access to a self-contained identity is impossible. It is in this sense that antagonism, or social division, is irreducible. There is no way of eliminating the constitutive outside to identity formation and the potential for that outside to negate the self's identity remains part of my identity formation.

On a broader scale, antagonism reveals the impossibility of the social to constitute itself as a closed entity, as a society. "Society never manages fully to be society" argues Laclau, "because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent it from constituting itself as an objective reality."<sup>87</sup> A discourse seeking to describe what society is could not be self-contained since it would be marked by its need for a constitutive outside from which it could circumscribe itself. Its relation to otherness (which is always unstable since that otherness is itself marked by otherness) prohibits society from constituting itself as an objectivity.

Antagonism points back to our understanding of a metaphysics of absence insofar as antagonism reveals a constitutive absence marking the social sphere: the possibility of closure. Any attempt at saying what the social is, is subverted by the moment of antagonism since this moment reveals the constitutive outside that would claim to coincide with the social. Every attempt to give closure, to define the social, is subverted by antagonism which prohibits a final suturing of the social by unveiling the overdetermination of identity formation through its discursive construction. As coterminous with a constitutive outside, antagonism must be understood as a form of *transcendence*, as an unaccessible, which is constitutive of the social. As Laclau puts it, the 'outside' of the 'constitutive outside' is a "*radical* outside, without a common measure with the

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<sup>87</sup> Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, 127.

‘inside’.”<sup>88</sup> And yet, since antagonism is constitutive of the social, it is not an absolute transcendence. Rather, it is a transcendence which must be understood as occurring *within immanence*. Furthermore, antagonism is not the transcendence of a *positive essence* such as an objectifiable understanding of ‘reason’ which would be the case within a ‘metaphysics of presence’. As transcendence, antagonism subverts objectivity insofar as it cannot be objectified. “The crucial point is that antagonism is the *limit of all objectivity*. This should be understood in its most literal sense: as the assertion that antagonism does not have an objective meaning, but is that which prevents the constitution of objectivity itself.”<sup>89</sup> Because the ‘other’ which marks identity formation is itself marked by otherness, we are confronted with the impossibility of achieving objective meaning. The subject/ object dichotomy crumbles.

Importantly, the theoretical framework I am attempting to construct is beginning to show more clearly its utility for my analysis of APEC which up to this point has seemed far removed. The category of subject position and that of antagonism are extremely useful tools for viewing the relationship between APEC and the parallel NGO. From these notions, the opposition

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<sup>88</sup> Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, 18. At this point, we can draw a parallel between Laclau’s understanding of the ‘radical outside’ of identity formation and Lefort’s understanding of flesh which he develops from his reading of Merleau-Ponty and which he uses to formulate his understanding of the irreducibility of Alterity or the social’s ‘*lieu autre*’. As Lefort argues, coming into being is immediately marked by an asymmetrical relationship within otherness. “[...] from the beginning of its appearance in the world, the child itself is named. To be named- whatever the character of the affiliation (through the father or the brother or the mother)- *testifies to an original and irreducible transcendence*.” Lefort, ‘Flesh and Otherness’, 11. That the individual’s name is given by the ‘other’ attests to the *originary* permanence of otherness in the individual, and points towards the radical outside which conditions the individual’s social existence. Interestingly, what is put into play with the child’s coming into the world as an originary experience within otherness is also echoed by Derrida’s attempt to articulate the messianic quality of ‘*l’événement*’. “La naissance, qui ressemble à ce que j’essaie de décrire, n’est peut-être, en fait, même pas adéquate à cette arrivance absolue. Dans les familles, elle est préparée, conditionnée, prénommée, prise dans un espace symbolique qui amortit l’arrivance. Il reste que, malgré ces anticipations et ces prénominations, l’aléa ne se laisse pas réduire, l’enfant qui arrive reste imprévisible, il parle de lui-même comme à l’*origine* d’un autre monde, ou à une *autre* origine de ce monde-ci. Je me débats avec ce concept impossible, l’arrivance messianique, depuis longtemps.” Jacques Derrida, ‘Artefactualités’, in *Échographies de la télévision*, Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1996), 20.

<sup>89</sup> Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, 17.

stems from the fact that APEC gives figure to a discourse on the social which impedes or negates the self completion of the identities voiced by NGOs. In this sense, APEC renders an image of the antagonism contained in the discourse of economic globalization. As the categories I am exploring in this chapter become clearer, their relevance for my analysis of APEC will begin to fall in place. That having been said, before moving on to the final section on discourse we need to clarify our definition of the *political* within the context of the previous discussion on foundation, the aporia and social antagonism. We now have the central components of the context in which the political finds itself.

***The politics of agnosticism: the distinction between 'la politique' and 'le politique'***

What becomes of the political within a 'metaphysics of absence'? So far we have seen elements of what the political would look like. What is left, however, is to formulate more clearly our definition of the political within the context established above. What I wish to show is that the political does not stem from foundational ground. Rather, the *political is precisely the attempt at laying that ground*. It is the attempt at establishing foundation within a symbolic order that institutes as a condition of its possibility the very *impossibility* of establishing foundation. As conditioned by an absence and social division, *foundation is inescapably political* since the symbolic order marked by the unfigurability of the place of power renders impossible an un-political or non-antagonistic foundation.

In order to elaborate on this understanding of the political, we need to make a distinction between *la politique* and *le politique* which translates roughly into the distinction

between ‘politics’ and ‘the political’. This differentiation is made by Lefort, Mouffe, Laclau, Richard Beardsworth, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy among others.<sup>90</sup> With this distinction, *la politique* corresponds to the practice of politics, as it is commonly understood. *la politique* is distinguished from other spheres of human activity, most often counterposed to economics. It appears to be located at a determinate level of the social, i.e., the state, enabled by, among other things, the public/ private as well as the inside/ outside dichotomy. As such, the practice of politics is seen to be demarcated by a territorially defined social space which forms part of a dominant political imagination. And as Rob Walker notes, the political imagination by which the practice of politics is understood is largely reproduced in traditional IR insofar as “[...] theories of international relations express a historically specific account of what political life is all about. They do so by affirming a familiar understanding of where it can occur [i.e., at the level of territorial states]”.<sup>91</sup> As such, where *la politique* can take place is circumscribed by representations of certain spatial limits. *la politique* is therefore predicated upon the possibility of establishing the distinction between internal and external politics as well as the distinction between the place of politics from the place of other human activity. Without these distinctions, the commonly understood practice of politics would be without meaning. This understanding of politics as located at a determinate level of the social has acquired a certain degree of ‘sedimentation’ or hegemony, i.e., the appearance of

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<sup>90</sup> In regards to Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy’s work see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, ‘Le ‘retrait’ du politique’, in *Le retrait du politique* eds. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1983), 183-200. For an English language account of the distinction between *la politique* and *le politique* see Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, 200-219, and also Nancy Fraser, ‘The French Derrideans: Politicizing Deconstruction or Deconstructing the Political?’, *New German Critique* no. 33, Fall (1984), 127-154.

<sup>91</sup> R.B.J. Walker, ‘International Relations and the Concept of the Political’, in *International Relations Theory Today*, 306 (emphasis added).

fixed and determined structures.<sup>92</sup> *la politique* is most often where political science begins and ends its inquiries thus consequently taking on the appearance of a mere stocktaking of a given reality, misrecognizing that it participates in the instituting of what it describes.<sup>93</sup>

*Le politique* on the other hand is not located at a determinate level of the social, it is not circumscribed by space. Rather, it concerns the ungrounded process of establishing foundation by which such distinctions, e.g., inside/ outside, public/ private, politics/ economics along with others such as rational/ irrational, legitimate/ illegitimate, friend/ enemy, can be generated and imbued with meaning. In the words of Jacob Torfing, the political “involves the construction of meaning in the face of a pre-ontological meaninglessness.”<sup>94</sup> From this context of pre-ontological meaninglessness (or a metaphysics of absence) the political as we have seen is understood as an attempt to essentialize meaning, to establish foundation forcefully within a symbolic order marked by the impossibility of establishing unconditionally any such foundation. A somewhat similar conception of the distinction between *la politique* et *le politique* is offered by Beardsworth in his analysis of the political within Derrida’s work. Beardsworth sees politics “as designating the domain or practice of human behaviour which normativizes the relations between a subject and its objects”, whereas the political is concerned with foundation insofar as it is “the instance that gathers or founds such practice as a practice.”<sup>95</sup> Beardsworth’s explanation in part follows that of Mouffe in

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<sup>92</sup> Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*, 71.

<sup>93</sup> Lefort’s usage of the distinction between *la politique* and *le politique* is motivated precisely by a desire to surmount this narrowness of social sciences and in particular political science. See Lefort, *Essais sur le politique*, 19-20. For a succinct explanation of this distinction see Poltier, *Claude Lefort: la découverte du politique*, 49-59.

<sup>94</sup> Jacob Torfing, *Politics, Regulation and the Modern Welfare State* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1998), 66.

<sup>95</sup> Beardsworth, *Derrida and the Political*, fn.1, 158.

her distinction between the two etymologies of the term '*politique*', *polis* and *polemos*. The first root meaning, that of governing the 'living together' in the city is assigned to *la politique*. *la politique* is then seen as the location where order or consensus *within* society is established, entailing as well the construction of order outside of that society.<sup>96</sup> The second meaning, *polemos*, i.e., 'conflict' is seen as the irreducible mark of the political which, as we will see below, is linked to her understanding of antagonism developed earlier.

In relation to *la politique*, *le politique* would be the move which institutes or generates the social as divided along public/private, inside/ outside lines upon which the practice of politics is enabled and given meaning. In other words, these dichotomies by which the practice of politics is generated and territorially defined *are political* (in the sense of *le politique*) since they seek to found or institute the social in a particular form rather than an other. The crucial point is that the practice of politics (*la politique*) is penetrated by *le politique* insofar as the latter contributes to continuously re-institute and generate the political ground (public/ private, inside/ outside, friend/ enemy) by which the practice known as politics is enabled, while simultaneously occulting the fact that it is generating its own ground. Thus, what appears as determined structures from which the practice of politics would be delineated is partially instituted through the latter's own political move. In other words, these structures are not prior to the practice of politics, the same way that the distinction between economics and politics is not prior to the practice of economics. Rather, both these sets of practice institute politically (in the sense of *le politique*) their own ground while occulting the fact that they are doing so.

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<sup>96</sup> Mouffe writes: "*la politique* [...] vise à établir un ordre, à organiser la coexistence humaine [...]." see Chantal Mouffe, *Le politique et ses enjeux: pour une démocratie plurielle* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte/MAUSS, 1994), 11.

This occultation reveals the operation of *le politique*. *le politique* viewed as an attempt at laying foundation involves a process *appearance/ occultation* by which the social is instituted and meaning is constructed. As a process of appearance/ occultation, *le politique* seeks to institute the social in a particular form rather than an other. The social's appearance is marked by an occultation not only of its generative principles but also of other possible forms. As Lefort states:

Le politique se révèle ainsi non pas dans ce qu'on nomme l'activité politique, mais dans ce double mouvement d'apparition et d'occultation du mode d'institution de la société. Apparition, en ce sens qu'émerge à la visibilité le procès par lequel s'ordonne et s'unifie la société, à travers ses divisions; occultation, en ce sens qu'un lieu de la politique [...] se désigne comme particulier, *tandis que se trouve dissimulé le principe générateur de la configuration de l'ensemble.*<sup>97</sup>

The appearance/ occultation by which the political institutes or founds the social has the effect of establishing a frontier, between for instance what is and what is not, between the legitimate and the illegitimate, between the rational and the irrational, between an 'us' and a 'them'. This mapping process by which *le politique* constructs frontiers enables the construction of meaning. It is for this reason that Laclau and Mouffe locate the experience of *le politique* as the experience of an 'antagonism' since the political in drawing its maps by which the terrain is established, entails an exclusion of those outside that terrain. As Mouffe states, "[i]n politics the very distinction between 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable' is already the drawing of a frontier; it has a political character and is always the expression of a given hegemony."<sup>98</sup>

This drawing of a frontier is necessarily marked by a *power relation* which

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<sup>97</sup> Lefort, *Essais sur le politique*, 19-20 (emphasis added).

<sup>98</sup> Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, 143.

accompanies the work of inclusion/ exclusion involved in creating boundaries. To draw this frontier power must bring into play an inside/ outside (*'le dedans/dehors'* in Lefort words) which enables boundaries to begin with. Here we arrive at a pivotal point which brings us back to where we began this chapter. Invoking an inside/ outside by which power draws frontiers points back to the notion of *mise en forme* with which I began the section on symbolic order of democracy. Recall that what is involved with the *mise en forme* of the social is the latter's relation to that which functions as its excess, i.e., its Alterity, or what Lefort calls the social's *'lieu autre'*. I had mentioned that both the political and foundation are conditioned by how this question of Alterity is dealt with: democracy's specific answer, contrary to premodern forms, was to leave the question of Alterity open or unanswered by leaving the place of power unfigurable. Hence, the corresponding secularization of the practice of politics resulting from its disentanglement with the religious does not lead to the secularization of *the political*: the political, by virtue of its boundary creating character remains conditioned by an excess which cannot be accessed, i.e., Alterity. In fact, Alterity must be seen as the political's condition of possibility since it is only through this exteriority (*'dimension d'exteriorité'*<sup>99</sup>) that the operation of the political can invoke an outside by which boundaries are constructed. In other words, power must point to a *constitutive outside* insofar as power, must point to a difference, must point to an Alterity. It cannot remain the 'same' or else how can it be power? If it is the same what distinguishes it as power? Thus, contrary to orthodox Marxism for example, power is not merely the product of immanent social reality in which forces of production would produce a power relation within social relations production. Power cannot be anchored solely in *immanence*. It must seek to anchor itself outside of the social, to a position from which it can

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<sup>99</sup> Lefort and Gauchet, 'Sur la démocratie: le politique et l'institution du social', 17.

discriminate, seek to make the particular universal, and distinguish between the legitimate and the illegitimate. And yet to do so, power must converse with the social. It cannot anchor itself to some self constituted outside. As Lefort points out, power is faced with “this eventual incapacity to assume the radical alterity that is demanded of it. For the effort to join the place of the Other engages it in a live commerce with the social body.”<sup>100</sup> This is the condition in which the political, *le politique* finds itself. In its effort to establish a frontier, to make the world appear as it is and not something else, to distinguish between the legitimate and the illegitimate, to make the particular universal, the political as foundation is the attempt to lodge itself in the ‘*lieu autre*’. But this attempt to access Alterity within the ‘*mise en forme*’ of the social in the democratic form is subverted by the symbolic unfigurability of the place of power. The other place is inoccupable.

Ce lieu est *inoccupable*, mais de telle sorte que l'épreuve de l'impossibilité de l'y installer s'avère constitutive des processus de socialisation, il est absent de notre champ, mais d'une absence qui y compte et l'organise. L'espace social se circonscrit à partir de lui *en tant qu'il est absent* [...] Au travers du pouvoir, s'indique ce lieu du dehors *comme absent*.<sup>101</sup>

Formulated differently the political, *le politique* is conditioned by the Alterity constitutive of the social. In other words, what constitutes the political is the impossible attempt to gain the position of the Alterity of the social from which its statements could irrevocably discriminate between what is real, what is legitimate, and what is not. The genius of the symbolic order of the democratic form is that it disenables the political from attaining this ‘other place’ by instituting symbolically the unfigurability of the place of power. It is for this reason that the ‘markers of certainty’ can always dissolve. The political, as a process of appearance/ occultation which has the effect of forcefully

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 16 (my translation).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 17.

drawing frontiers cannot anchor them with any permanent fixity to an empty place. The more a political discourse would attempt to do so, that is the more it would attempt to fix (and universalize) meaning by anchoring itself to this '*lieu autre*' the more it runs the risk of unveiling the antagonism its political move of drawing a frontier seeks to occult. It is for this reason that the political as Torfing notes is "simultaneously, a constitutive and subversive dimension of the social fabric."<sup>102</sup> It is both the needed moment of foundation but also the instance when foundation is subverted by its political character.

This chapter has sought to develop an understanding of foundation and the political as conditioned by a metaphysics of absence. When thinking about the question of foundation and the political this should be our starting point or our *ethos*, in Connolly's words.<sup>103</sup> However, it is precisely this starting point which, as I argued at the beginning of this chapter, is occulted by the discursive manoeuvre of the current characterization of the debate on the question of foundation in IT. As we have seen, this occultation occurs through the privileging of the equivalence between foundation and presence which is authorized by the terrain deployed by the debate. What I have sought to emphasize here is that the privileged starting point should instead be foundation as *(im)possible*. This starting point immediately brings us to the political understood as the attempt to lay foundation in the face of pre-ontological meaninglessness or metaphysics of absence. Rather than abandoning the political act when confronted by the terrain of 'undecidability' (the concern raised in the quote from Critchley at the beginning of this chapter), it is precisely this 'undecidability' that becomes the very condition of possibility of the political. In other words, the

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<sup>102</sup> Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*, 69.

<sup>103</sup> Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization*.

impossibility of articulating an unconditional foundational discourse within a symbolic order marked by the unfigurability of the place of power immediately marks any discourse on the social as political. Consequently, any such discourse on the social is open to contestation.

### *The category of discourse*

[...] la parole témoigne d'une implication dans le monde qu'elle[...] cherche[...] à décrire, que toute position d'une connaissance en survol est illusoire et qu'en conséquence, la philosophie, tout comme la littérature, fait voir avec des mots, ne se défait pas du travail de l'expression, du geste qui ne donne du sens que parce qu'il est lui-même sensible, participe de l'espace qu'il évoque.<sup>104</sup>

The category of discourse has been hovering in the margins of this entire chapter and needs clarification. Most of the authors I have explored use discourse, language, text, or speech as the predominant location for what they seek to articulate. The reason, I think, is quite simple. The discursive is all that there is insofar as it is all that can be accessed. “Il n’y pas de hors-texte”<sup>105</sup> is Derrida’s well known and abused formulation. This does not mean that there is no material reality. It means quite simply that it is impossible to know or assign meaning to this reality outside of its discursive construction. Saussure had explained this some time ago through his linguistic theory which asserted that it was through language that objects attain meaning and form. Language provides the systems of difference by which meaning is attained. From this understanding of semiology Laclau and Mouffe<sup>106</sup> conclude that “every object is constituted as an object of discourse,

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<sup>104</sup> Claude Lefort, ‘Philosophie et non-philosophie’, *Esprit*, 6 juin (1982), 102.

<sup>105</sup> Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967), 227.

<sup>106</sup> On the links between Saussure and Laclau and Mouffe see Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe*, 84-87.

insofar as no object is given outside of every discursive condition of emergence.”<sup>107</sup> There is always a text attached to the objectification of social reality, and it is only through the text that we know or assign meaning to this reality.

An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of ‘natural phenomena’ or ‘expressions of the wrath of God’, depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.<sup>108</sup>

In this sense, one must abandon the distinction between the material and the ideal inasmuch as a particular discourse is not merely a reflection of an existing material world. Rather, it is an “articulatory practice which constitutes and organizes”<sup>109</sup> this material reality along certain lines and not others. In short, the material can only be known discursively, and discursivity actively constructs the meaning assigned to the material world.

Now, is it possible to leave it here, merely at the level of discourse? In other words, is text all that there is to human being? The answer is no. Even though social reality can only be known discursively, the crucial point is that we cannot remain at the level of text if we wish to account for the political. Indeed, one of the objectives of this chapter has been to show that discourse can never give the complete story since there is always an absence constitutive of the social which cannot be captured by the discursive. To think otherwise would effectively substitute one illusion for another. That is, substitute a purely material world, characteristic of positivist social

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<sup>107</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 107.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

sciences, where language is merely a representation of an already existing reality, with that of a purely textual world. Not only is every text overdetermined by other texts pointing towards the intertextuality of meaning, but intertextuality itself is also overdetermined by the absence constitutive of the social: what Lefort would call the '*lieu autre*', what Laclau and Mouffe would call antagonism, or what Derrida would call the aporia. Without such an overdetermination of the textual world by an absence constitutive of the social which eludes the symbolization of texts we would fall into the fiction of pure immanence in which there would be no gap between discourses on the social and the social space from which they are deployed. A purely textual world would occult the condition of possibility for the political by eclipsing the absence constitutive of the social which prohibits a particular discourse from arresting the entire field of meaning. It is the absence constitutive of the social which disenables a purely textual world and which, as we saw earlier, provides the condition of possibility for the political. Within this context, the political is the attempt at discursively laying foundation and correspondingly answering the question of foundation. However, the attempt remains a failure because of the absence constitutive of the social, and it is this absence which continually subverts the political from discursively founding and finally answering the question of foundation.

The central importance of discursivity within non-essentialist theoretical currents becomes clearer when viewed through the Lefortian understanding of the democratic symbolic form. With the symbolic instituting of the place of power as empty, there is a corresponding effect of increasing the plurality of discourses since no one social discourse can consubstantiate itself with

power.<sup>110</sup> This symbolic order disenables establishing a pole, a centre to which a singular unifying discourse could be tied. Quoting Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of discourse echoes this necessary symbolic transformation as a condition for the pervasiveness of the discursive as the primary field of inquiry.

Derrida, for example, starts from a radical break in the history of the concept of structure, occurring at the moment in which the centre- the *transcendental signified* in its multiple forms: eidos, arché, telos, energeia, ousia, alétheia, etc.- is abandoned, and with it the possibility of fixing a meaning which underlies the flow of differences. At this point, Derrida generalizes the concept of discourse in a sense coincident with that of our text.[...] 'This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a centre or origin, everything became discourse- provided we can agree on this word- that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely'.<sup>111</sup>

The modern symbolic order which eliminates the reference to an unconditional other-worldly pole can be seen as marking 'the radical break in the history' when the centre is abandoned. In so doing, there is a inauguration of a form of discourse which has as an objective foundation without being able to establish it. The significance of discourse increases inasmuch as there is a corresponding continuous, although vain, attempt at moving beyond discourse to anchor the social of some firmer objective immanent social ground. But the symbolic empty place of power subverts attaining such

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<sup>110</sup> It is for this specific reason that Lefort situates ideology as a form of discourse which can only emerge with the symbolic transformation of the democratic adventure. Lefort writes: "My outline [of ideology] begins from the following conception: it restricts ideology to a particular type of society, and thus formally challenges the application of the term to a feudal, despotic, or stateless structure in which the dominant discourse still draws its legitimacy from the reference to a transcendent order and leaves no room for the notion of a social reality intelligible in itself, nor, by the same token, for the notion of a history or nature intelligible in itself." Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 184. On Lefort's understanding of ideology see also John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 16-41.

<sup>111</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 111-112.

ground, and for this reason the social is opened to a radical indeterminacy. With the impossibility of a metaphysics of presence in its multiple forms (eidos, arché, telos, energeia, ousia, alétheia), not only is there a proliferation of discourses seeking to fill the void, there is also the corresponding effect of extending the field of discourse. In other words, when, as Derrida argues, ‘everything became discourse’ the possibility of opening the field of inquiry to new areas can be envisioned. The demarcation between discourses which are politically significant and those which are not tends to disappear.

Does this conception of discourse not follow closely what used to be understood under the heading of ‘ideology’ and its companion term ‘hegemony’? Is this merely a more fashionable ‘postie’ way of addressing an older problématique most often associated with Marxism? The short answer is yes and no. It would be fair to say that in recent years the term discourse has displaced ideology (not so in the case of hegemony) in most of the critical theoretical developments in IR.<sup>112</sup> However, exploring the relationship between discourse, ideology, and hegemony may serve to clarify how discourse is understood in this thesis as well as the possible forms discourse may take.

To begin with, how we understand the relationship between discourse, ideology, and hegemony obviously depends on how the terms are themselves understood. The abandonment of ideology in favour of discourse stems in part from a questioning of the theoretical ground which usually underpins the term. Generally, the concept of ideology relied on being able to identify a hidden social reality that was misrecognized or distorted. This real or true reality was seen to be

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<sup>112</sup> Parts of this section on ideology are taken from Miguel de Larrinaga and Marc Doucet, ‘Navigating the Interstices Between the ‘Grand Either/Or’: Claude Lefort, Otherness, and the (Re)Thinking of The Global Political Economy’ (Paper presented at the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Brock University, St. Catherines, Ontario, June, 1996).

outside of the effects of ideology. It is from this understanding that Marx used his famous metaphor of ideology as a *camera obscura*.<sup>113</sup> However, when one relinquishes the possibility of attaining a pre or unpolitical foundational ground (as is the case for this thesis), then the true undistorted social reality which ideology was capable of veiling must also be abandoned. As Laclau has pointed out, “[c]ategories such as ‘distortion’ and ‘false representation’ made sense as long as something ‘true’ or ‘undistorted’ was considered to be within human reach.”<sup>114</sup> However, once an extra-ideological standpoint is considered untenable, distinguishing between the ideological and the non-ideological becomes problematic. Indeed, “[f]or discourse analysis, the very notion of an access to reality unbiased by any discursive devices or conjunctions with power is ideological.”<sup>115</sup> The edifice of the concept of ideology relied on the belief that under the veil of an ideological discourse, there existed a true, if hidden, transparent social condition. This conceptualisation hinged upon the belief that there was a possibility of attaining knowledge of this social reality unmediated by a pre-discursive field. Those who use discourse generally accept that any such knowledge of reality is always already discursively laden, and that this discursive ‘blinder’ cannot be removed. As such, the theoretical vantage point which most often accompanies the term discourse would indeed seem to lead to the irrelevance of ideology as a concept insofar as it works at undermining the possibility of identifying

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<sup>113</sup> This metaphor conveys the misprision of ideology as a false, or ocularly distorted, image of a ‘real’. As Martin Jay explains: “Here the contrast is between a false vision that is reversed and inverted and a true one that is straightforwardly adequate to the object it sees. The darkness and obscurity of the closed box is also implicitly set against the transparent clarity of a *camera lucida*, in which ideology is banished in the glare of the enlightenment.” Martin Jay, *Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 135.

<sup>114</sup> Ernesto Laclau, ‘The Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology’, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 1, no. 3 (1996), 202-203.

<sup>115</sup> Slavoj Žižek, ‘Introduction: The Spectre of Ideology’, in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1994) 10.

pre-ideological social ground from which ideological discourse could be seen as a possibility. In a sense, one could say that ideology becomes irrelevant not because of its deficiency as an analytical tool. Rather, as Žižek has noted, ideology is abandoned because

[...] this notion somehow grows ‘too strong’, it begins to embrace everything, inclusive of the very neutral, extra-ideological ground supposed to provide the standard by means of which one can measure ideological distortion. That is to say, is not the ultimate result of discourse analysis that the order of discourse as such is inherently ‘ideological’?<sup>116</sup>

Thus, the problem is not with ideology as an analytical tool *per se*, but with the impossibility of attaining a pre-discursive vantage point from which a judgement could be made as to what is ideological. What then, can we do with the term? Is it possible to salvage anything? For some, it is, but it requires reversing how we understand the term on its head. Whereas ideology was generally understood as discourse which *distorted* a true transparent social reality, i.e., the *camera obscura*, what now becomes of ideology is the opposite: rendering an image of a true transparent social reality is the purpose or work of an ideological discourse. In other words, within the context of pre-ontological meaninglessness, or metaphysics of absence, where the social is conditioned by an absence disabling totality, the function of an ideological discourse is precisely to render a picture of totality thereby attempting to ‘fix’ the field meaning. Ideology no longer distorts totality, it seeks to create it. Ideology seeks to mask social division, close off or “suture the infinitude of the social” as Laclau would say.<sup>117</sup> ‘Distortion’ and ‘false representation’ remain as relevant markers of an ideological discourse. But what is being distorted or misrepresented is not the true condition of social being as Marx understood it. Rather, what is distorted by the ideological discourse is the fact

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>117</sup> Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.

that such an unconditional, transparent and non-discursive social reality is unattainable. The ideological discourse purports to be merely *l'annoncé du réel*, an objective reflection of social reality, distorting the fact that such an unconditional representation of social reality is made impossible. The inoccupable place of power of the modern symbolic order has ultimately disabled such a rendering. Thus, the problem confronting the ideological discourse is how to be unconditional within a symbolic order which has rendered unconditionality *symbolically* unattainable. Whereas the mediaeval discourse on 'Justice' for instance could still exploit the symbolic order of the king's two bodies and appear to be anchored to an unconditional source, ideological discourse no longer has the possibility of tying itself to an exteriority. The only words available to the ideological discourse are those which fall within *immanence*, i.e., within a particular socio-historical experience. As Lefort would say, ideology must provide a reading of reality from a vantage point which is itself already a socio-historical experience of the real ("*une lecture du réel depuis le réel*").<sup>118</sup> In this sense, the work of ideology is to collapse the element of 'representation' in discourse in order to make representation and reality seem as one. Ideological discourse attempts to ground and sustain its legitimacy and authority by no longer referring to a "transcendent realm, a realm of gods, spirits, or mythical figures."<sup>119</sup> As Lefort has argued, rather than be a mere

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<sup>118</sup> Lefort, *Les formes de l'histoire*, 300. It is important to note that Lefort's work on the genesis of ideology makes a distinction between 'bourgeois ideology', 'totalitarian ideology', and 'invisible ideology', the latter being the form which is found in current Western societies. For Lefort, invisible ideology combines the strengths of both bourgeois and totalitarian ideology. "Concealing the distance between the representation and the real, which jeopardizes bourgeois ideology, renouncing the realization of the representation in the form of the totalization of the real, which jeopardizes totalitarian ideology: such, in my view, is the double principle which organizes a new logic of dissimulation." Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 225. The discussion on ideology presented here, in relation to Lefort's typology, corresponds more specifically to 'invisible ideology'. As it relates to the previous discussion, invisible ideology has a similar connotation to what Žižek saw as the permeation of ideology in all areas. Invisible ideology is ideology 'made too strong'.

<sup>119</sup> John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 26.

‘discourse on the social’, an ideological discourse is meant to be ‘the social discourse’. Thus, the fundamental threat to any ideological discourse purporting to be an unconditional image of the real is ultimately the inability to access a point from where an unconditional discourse could be written. Because it cannot avail itself of this point, an ideological discourse always runs the risk of becoming seen as merely another discourse on the social, a particular with no privileged access to the universal it invokes. As John Thompson has remarked in his assessment of Lefort’s work on ideology:

As a discourse on the social, ideology must remain within the social sphere, must avail itself of the resources of the social in order to carry out its task of sealing every crack. This is, however, a risky, conflict-laden undertaking. For ideology always runs the risk of appearing *as* a discourse, a particular discourse in the service of a particular group or class; and hence its capacity to dissimulate social and temporal divisions is constantly threatened by the possibility that the very attempt to dissimulate will become apparent to all.<sup>120</sup>

Since ideology in modern social spaces cannot represent itself as a transcendental absolute, it must constantly reproduce itself in all social spheres and in all directions in order to mask social divisions. Contrary to ‘pre-modern’ social spaces in which ‘Divine Law’ could give meaning to division, divisions in modern social spaces run the risk of becoming apparent. Ideological discourse, therefore, always runs the risk of appearing very disjointed and contradictory since it has no single transcendental referent to which it can be anchored. But perhaps more importantly, ideological discourse which has gotten ‘too strong’ by eliminating the representational dimension of discourse tends to eclipse the Alterity of the social. It does so because it attempts to “invade[...] the social field’ and works at ‘abolish[ing] all distances’ between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ ”.<sup>121</sup> All differences

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<sup>120</sup> Thompson, ‘Editor’s Introduction’, 16-17.

<sup>121</sup> Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 229. For Lefort, ‘invading the social field’ is a task which is greatly enhanced by the advent of mass communication.

are collapsed into the same and are made to appear equal in their singularity. What is being sought is the evacuation of the gap between discourse and its referent, the social. What appeared in this chapter as the '*lieu autre*', the aporia, the antagonism, and social division is no longer *tacitly* recognized as a feature of the symbolic ordering of social relations. Once an ideological discourse appropriates this tone however, it risks losing its function. As Lefort states,

The more the *discourse on the social* seeks to coincide with *social discourse*, the more it seeks to control the uncontrollable movement of the institution, to take hold of the signs of the instituting moment, the more it runs the risk of losing the function that ideology has assumed hitherto: *the legitimation of the established order*, not only the legitimation of a system ownership, but of the real as such. It creates the conditions for a contestation which [...] is aimed beyond the expressions of power and exploitation, at the reference points of socialization in the modern world, and which brings to light the question of the *Other*, the question of *Being*.<sup>122</sup>

As is suggested by Lefort in the above quote, ideological discourse, no matter how strong, can not totalize the field of meaning without raising the question of Alterity or Otherness. A total masking of social division cannot be accomplished not even with physical violence.<sup>123</sup> Ultimately, as Lefort suggests, such an attempt serves to prepare the conditions for contestation.

Viewing contestation as an effect of ideology 'made too strong' brings us to a useful distinction that could be made between ideology and hegemony. Although hegemony is often used to characterize a discourse which also seeks to legitimize the establish order, there are those who see hegemony as containing a double function: a tool for both 'negative' and 'positive' ideological discourses. In other words, hegemony can be seen as the feature of a discourse of oppression as well

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<sup>122</sup> Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 235-236 (emphasis added).

<sup>123</sup> On the relationship between ideology and physical violence from a standpoint pertinent to this discussion see notably Slavoj Žižek, 'Invisible Ideology: Political Violence between Fiction and Fantasy', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 1, no. 1 (1996), 16.

as a discourse of contestation. Even though more will be said on the term hegemony and its relation to social contestation in Chapter Four, a few words here will help in clarify our understanding of discourse.

The term hegemony, as it has appeared in critical social sciences, is most often associated with Antonio Gramsci. In his work, hegemony generally referred to a process of ‘organizing consent’ meaning “the processes through which subordinated forms of consciousness are constructed without recourse to violence or coercion.”<sup>124</sup> But perhaps what is most important about Gramsci’s contribution to our understanding of hegemony is how he also employed the term as part of a socialist project which sought to struggle against the established order. With complement terms such as ‘war of position’ and ‘war of manoeuvre’ Gramsci envisioned hegemonic or ideological discourse as a component of ‘positive’ political struggle. It is within this tradition that Laclau and Mouffe have appropriated the double meaning of the term hegemony and made it a feature of a ‘socialist strategy’ leading towards a struggle for ‘radical democracy’. As the authors argue, “[i]t is not in the abandonment of the democratic terrain but, on the contrary, in the extension of the field of democratic struggles to the whole of civil society and the state, that the possibility resides for a *hegemonic strategy* for the Left.”<sup>125</sup> However, because Laclau and Mouffe conceive hegemony within a theoretical frame similar to this thesis, a socialist hegemonic strategy cannot “determine *a priori* agents of change, levels of effectiveness in the field of the social, and privileged points and moments of rupture” as was the case for the traditional politics of the left.<sup>126</sup> In other

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<sup>124</sup> Barrett, ‘Ideology, Politics, and Hegemony: From Gramsci to Laclau and Mouffe’, 238.

<sup>125</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 176 (emphasis added).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

words, the discourse of contestation is also unable to access an extra-ideological standpoint. It finds itself in the same symbolic order as the ideological discourse which seeks a 'legitimation of the established order'. Thus, hegemonic struggle must be waged at the level of discourse framed by the symbolic order of democracy. This implies that a 'strategy of opposition' must lead towards a strategy of construction of a new order, but that such a movement can only occur as a struggle for new discursive possibilities which allow for the articulation of new political imaginaries. How this discursive struggle works itself out more specifically will be the focus of Chapter Four.

How does ideology and hegemony as explained above relate to this thesis? One could suggest that the terms roughly correspond to the two forms of discourse each analysed in Chapters Three and Five respectively. As such, APEC's discourse would be ideological whereas the NGO discourse articulated at the parallel forums would be hegemonic. However, such an assessment would be, in my opinion, too hasty and perhaps inaccurate for two reasons. First, using these terms in this manner would require a much deeper examination of their respective histories than the one provided here. Such an analysis therefore, is beyond the breadth of this thesis. Second, and more importantly, my suspicion is that viewing APEC and the NGOs' discourse through these terms would be inaccurate. If APEC's discourse was ideological, as in ideology 'made too strong', it would not be generating such substantial opposition. It would be more successful in eliminating the representational dimension of its discourse. And for the NGO discourse to be hegemonic, part of a strategy of construction of a new order, it would have to be more successful than it has been in providing the political imagination for a genuinely 'new' order. As will become clear in Chapter Five, the NGO discourse has not been entirely effective in providing a genuinely new imaginary.

***Towards a radical interdisciplinary approach: The in-between route on the question of foundation and its relations to the political in international theory***

The 'in-between' route opened by the debate on the question of foundation and its relation to the political has significantly distanced us from the ordinary field of theorizing in discipline of international relations. Nevertheless, it is in my view the only way to proceed within the context of the current critical work in IT. It is from this context that this chapter has sought to articulate a way of viewing foundation and the political which can be used to explore the relationship between APEC and the parallel NGO forums. A number of points can be summarized before we move on to the other chapters:

1) A recognition of the '*mise en scène*' in which the debate between foundationalist/ anti-foundationalist occurs is crucial. This '*mise en scène*' stems from a symbolic transformation which is inaugurated by the democratic adventure. The instituting of the place of power as empty is the symbolic '*mise en forme*' of the social which enables the debate to occur. The reason why the debate has been mischaracterized is precisely because the previous point has not been sufficiently taken into account.

2). With the emptying of the place of power in the democratic symbolic order there is a corresponding instituting '*en permanence*' of the question of foundation. However, the question remains unanswerable because it is precisely this 'unanswerability' which is the very condition of possibility of the democratic adventure. Foundation is caught within its own aporia insofar as it is the experience of its own impossibility. Thus, there can be no foundation and yet the question of foundation is not removed. On the contrary, it is brought to the very heart of the social. This has the effect of installing a metaphysics of absence at the heart of social life since an unconditional foundation remains absent from the social field.

3) With the symbolic mutation of the modern political form, social division is anchored *within* the sphere of the social as opposed to being hierarchical and symbolically ordained from elsewhere. From here, we are lead to an understanding of subjectivity which is lateral. The subject must be seen in terms of subject positions since subjectivity without reference to an unconditional other-worldly pole must be seen *in relation to*. Since subjectivity is seen *in relation to*, there is a necessary overdetermination of identity. Subjectivity cannot be self enclosed. Rather, it is constitutively determined by the 'other'. This leads to the concept of antagonism as the fundamental feature of identity formation since the 'other' is always a

potential antagonist capable of denying my identity. Antagonism as a constitutive outside to identity prohibits closure and totality.

4) The effect of the democratic symbolic order on the question of foundation and on identity formation leads us directly to the political. This necessitates the distinction between *la politique* and *le politique*. Whereas *la politique* entails the commonly understood practice of politics, *le politique* is embroiled with foundation in a context of metaphysics of absence. The political becomes an experience of the absence constitutive of the social insofar as it seeks to establish meaning by creating boundaries in the face of pre-ontological meaninglessness. To do so, it must attempt to access Alterity or Otherness within a symbolic order which prohibits such an attempt.

5) All of this is revealed at the level of discourse. It is through discourse that we can find the traces of the absence constitutive of the social which conditions the political and the question of foundation. There is no distinction between the material and discourse since material reality can only be accessed discursively. 'Ideology' and 'hegemony' can be seen as 'negative' and 'positive' discourses.

The objective of the following chapter will be to illustrate how the theoretical vantage point developed here can be used to offer a reading of APEC's discourse. From this theoretical prism APEC is no longer seen merely as an international economic organization. Nor is it to be understood as the product of prior forces, i.e., interstate economic cooperation, or global market forces. Rather, based on the theoretical tools developed in this chapter, APEC will be read as a *political* site.

## Chapter Three

### The Discursive Manoeuvres of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

APEC has already eliminated the risk of a three-bloc world. A few years ago there was much *angst* about the possibility that the world would move to three competing blocs- one in North America, one in Asia, one in Europe. I always thought that was a mistake, but APEC has certainly terminated that risk. A two-block world may still emerge, but that is certainly less bad. A three-player game is the most dangerous of all.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Introduction*

The objective of this chapter is to explore how the political move of APEC's discourse occults the possibility of deterritorializing democracy appearing to keep APEC outside the realm of the democratic imaginary. In other words, how does the appearance/ occultation which accompanies the practice of politics of APEC's discourse function in a manner which sustains the territorialization of politics? My argument is that the primary political move of APEC's discourse which allows it to eclipse the possibility of deterritorializing democracy is to *(de)politicize* itself by seeking an articulation which suggests that it operates solely at the level of the practice of politics. This gives the appearance that APEC is merely the byproduct of more fundamental prior forces such

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<sup>1</sup> C. Fred Bergsten, 'APEC', *Vancouver 1996: The Annual Meeting of the Trilateral Commission* (New York: Trilateral Commission Publications, 1996), 14. Bergsten is director of the Washington based Institute for International Economics. He was also chairman of APEC's Eminent Persons Group (EPG) from 1992 to 1995 when the group was dissolved. The EPG reports that were produced and chaired by Bergsten were used as blueprints for APEC's free trade and investment area agenda. Within American foreign trade policy circles, Bergsten is perhaps APEC's most ardent and influential booster. Indeed, he has earned the nicknamed 'Mr. APEC'. See the Subcommittees on Asia and Pacific Affairs and International Economic Policy and Trade, International Relations Committee, House of Representatives, U.S. Congress, 'The Fifth Summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific' (One hundred fifth Congress, first session, November 6, 1997).

as global economic processes, or interstate cooperation in a era of increased economic 'interdependence' rather than as a site from which these forces are given the appearance of a fix structured reality, i.e., a *political* site. To (de)politicize is to *occult*, *eclipse* or *obscure* the political rather than to truly *depoliticize*. Recall that the act of (de)politicization is a political act in and of itself to the extent that it seeks to occult the 'politicalness' of its foundation by means of a particular political discourse, one which would be somehow unpolitical. Thus, following the theoretical stance adopted here (de)politicization can never be achieved insofar as it contains a double movement which necessarily leads to a politicization. In this sense, a (de)politicizing discourse creates, in Derridian terms, its own aporia or condition of impossibility since viewing something as un-political is to propose an *a priori* particular political discourse.

This chapter will explore some the discursive manoeuvres of APEC's discourse and how they operate at the level of the political rather than merely at the level of the practice of politics. Through these manoeuvres there is an occultation of the possibility of deterritorializing democracy. As the opening quote suggests, rather than limit my inquiry to APEC's official discourse, I have broadened it in view of generating an image of what I feel to be some of the more significant discursive manoeuvres which accompany APEC. Together, these discursive manoeuvres create significant elements of a dominant imaginary or narrative from which APEC is born and to which APEC contributes. This imaginary functions as the (con)text from which APEC is read and which it subsequently sustains and (re)invents. The notions of performative/ constative explored in Chapter Two should not be lost on the reader at this point. Given that my intention is to be illustrative rather than comprehensive, I will limit myself to a number of discursive manoeuvres that

intersect what could be divided into formal and practical discourse.<sup>2</sup> As the reader will notice, I have chosen to penetrate what I understand to be APEC's discourse primarily from the vantage point of the formal discourse<sup>3</sup> while using as a supplement the practical or official discourse. Although this

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<sup>2</sup> I borrow this distinction from others which have used it within the field of critical geopolitics in order to apprehend the various sites of production of forms of 'geopolitical reasoning'. Within this body of literature, this categorization refers to two separate terrains which share in the process of production of a particular way of viewing geopolitics. In this chapter, I substitute geopolitics with Asia-Pacific economic cooperation. See in particular Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby, 'Introduction: Rethinking Geopolitics: Towards a Critical Geopolitics', in *Rethinking Geopolitics*, eds., Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby (London: Routledge, 1998), 1-15. See also an earlier article by Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, 'Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy', *Political Geography*, 11, no. 2 (1992), 190-204. Agnew largely reuses this same categorization in his co-authored book with Stuart Corbridge. See John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 1995), chapter three.

<sup>3</sup> Within the formal discourse I reunite two strands which we find in the mainstream study of international political economy (IPE) and international relations (IR). On the one hand, we find a form of international economic neo-liberalism which focuses on the workings of the regional economy in order to explain the origins of economic relations among countries in the region. APEC is seen as a byproduct of regional and/ or global economic forces and its success is tied to its ability to continue the trend towards some form of regional economic integration or cooperation based on free-trade principles and market forces. Economic forces are the primary vantage point for this first stream and APEC is to be understood as an extension of these. On the other hand, we find a form of neo-liberal institutionalism which focus on states and their ability to cooperate in a Post-Cold war environment. Following the 1980s work of such authors as Robert Keohane, Stephen Krasner, and Oran Young on states and regimes the primary vantage point for this strand is the state and the interstate system along with the fundamental anarchy which always conditions the possibility/ impossibility of cooperation. As such, the cooperation/ conflict problématique applied to what is seen as always potentially conflictual international economic issues overwhelmingly dominates much of this second stream while also functioning as one of the primary impediments identified by the first stream for the free working of economic forces underlying free market integration. These two streams of the formal discourse form a synthesis in the manner in which their readings tend to (de)politicize APEC. Thus, despite the appearance of different positions, their shared positivist epistemological standing comes to have the same (de)politicizing effect which is not only limited to APEC but also the broader related movement towards regional economic cooperation based on perceived free-trade principles. Among some of the literature that I associate to these two strands see *Asia-Pacific Crossroads: Regime Creation and the Future of APEC*, eds. Vinod K. Aggarwal and Charles E. Morrison, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), *Whither APEC? The Progress to Date and Agenda for the Future*, ed. C. Fred Bergsten (Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 1997), *Pacific Dynamism and the International Economic System*, eds. C. Fred Bergsten and Marcus Noland (Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 1993), Donald Crone, 'Does Hegemony Matter? The Reorganization of the Pacific Political Economy', *World Politics*, 45, no. 4 (1993), 510-525, Donald Crone, 'The Politics of Emerging Pacific Cooperation', *Pacific Affairs*, 65, no. 1 (1992), 68-83, Peter Drysdale, *International Economic Pluralism: Economic Policy in East Asia and the Pacific* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988), *Asia-Pacific Regionalism: Readings in International Economic Relations*, eds. Ross Garnaut and Peter Drysdale (Pymble Australia: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), Andrew Elek, 'APEC -Motives, Objectives and Prospects', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 46, no. 2 (1992), 161-173, Andrew Elek, 'Trade Policy for the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990's: The Potential of Open Regionalism', *American Economic Review*, 82, no. 2 (1992), 74-78, Andrew Elek, 'Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC)', *Southeast Asian Affairs 1991* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), 33-48, *Pacific Economic Relations in the 1990s: Cooperation or Conflict?*, eds. Richard Higgott, Richard Leaver and John Ravenhill (Boulder Co.: Lynne Rienner, 1993), *Pacific Cooperation: Building Economic Security Regimes in the Asia-Pacific Region*, eds. Andrew Mack and John Ravenhill (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), *Economic Dynamism in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Grahame Thompson

way of proceeding is partly an arbitrary methodological choice, it is also meant to be a reflection of the place of theory for this thesis. Since the vantage point from which this thesis envisions its topic views theory as part of its subject, what theory has to say about APEC is particularly relevant. This does not mean however, that the discourse *of* APEC is not as important as the discourse *on* APEC. On the contrary, in a fundamental sense, both the practical and formal discourse occupy the place of theory insofar as they both performatively contribute to giving that which has no prior existence to discursivity the appearance of a determined reality. This is not to say that they are both identical in tone or that there is a causal relationship between theory and practice. Sometimes the discourses *on* APEC and *of* APEC are mutually reinforcing and sometimes they are not. The idea is simply that both the formal and practical discourse informs our understanding of Asia-Pacific economic cooperation, and both contribute to rendering a dominant imaginary from which APEC is read. What they do have in common however, is that they both (de)politicize the practice of politics deployed by APEC, i.e., they both purport to be merely describing what is professed to be already there. APEC is seen either as the byproduct of more fundamental economic forces such as ‘market driven regional integration’, or as the appendage of states cooperating on issues of regional and global economic management. Consequently, APEC is void of any political content in and of itself since it is seen as being generated by more primal international and global forces. Through this (de)politicization there is an occultation of the possibility of deterritorializing democracy because what appears as determined structures which exclude the democratic imaginary from APEC’s world is reinstated.

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(London: Routledge in association with the Open University, 1998), *Cooperation or Rivalry? Regional Integration in the Americas and the Pacific Rim*, eds. Shoji Nishijima and Peter H. Smith, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

The first discursive manoeuvre I will explore in this chapter lies in the way that economic issues must be geopoliticized for APEC to have any meaning. Both the formal and practical discourse read international economics geopolitically, thus enabling the primary ground, i.e., conflict, from which the economic cooperation embodied in APEC can be seen as a positive outcome. Thus, the formal and the practical discourse deploy a form of geopolitical reasoning. The second discursive manoeuvre is located in the manner in which the cooperation/ conflict problématique (re)deployed through a 'regime theory' analysis of APEC allows for a (de)politicization of economic cooperation among states. Through a series of equivalences which are invoked by regime theory, APEC becomes the end result of reasoned action by state representatives. Cooperation among states is (de)politicized since it is *a priori* equated with reasoned and learned behaviour. The third manoeuvre is contained within APEC's discourse on 'open regionalism'. Open regionalism is perhaps APEC's most ardent attempt to contribute a theoretical invention to the academic world of international economics. It is a concept that APEC has made its own and which has been, by all accounts, enthusiastically adopted within academic circles as a novel non-discriminatory approach to regional economic cooperation. My intent is to show how the discursive practice of open regionalism seeks to disaggregate politics from 'economic regionalism'. This manoeuvre reflects the broader attempt pervasive in APEC's discourse to disaggregate politics and economics. To do so, it must reinstitute the division between economics and politics *politically*. In many ways, this third discursive manoeuvre captures the primary move of (de)politicization which accompanies APEC's formal and practical discourse and highlights the relationship between the two. As we will see, the discursive practice of open regionalism within the formal discourse has endeavoured to lend theoretical validity and authority to APEC's usage of the

terms ‘member economies’ and ‘economic leaders’. The final discursive manoeuvre explored in this chapter is found by placing APEC within the broader ‘Asia-Pacific imaginary’. As Arif Dirlik has argued,

[...] the idea of the Pacific is not so much a well-defined idea as it is a discourse that seeks to construct what is pretended to be its point of departure [...] That the Pacific is an invented concept does not mean that the region does not exist except as an idea, but that what exists does so by virtue of human interactions and the conceptualizations that endow those interactions with meaning.<sup>4</sup>

With this last section, my intent more precisely is to explore the most prominent set of signifiers which inform the broader (pre)text for which Asia-Pacific economic cooperation is read. ‘Miracle’, ‘dynamism’, ‘tigers’, ‘dragons’, ‘flying geese’, and the ‘Asian flu’ serve to create a (pre)text which invokes a ‘difference’, meant to be an ‘Asian difference’. Reading APEC from this (pre)text reinforces the idea that the organization represents a departure from the ‘Western’ way of doing things towards an ‘APEC way’.<sup>5</sup> However, the difference these signifiers are meant to capture only serve to mask the manner in which in the end they serve to (re)produce a geo-political and geo-economic imaginary centred on states and interstate relations.

### ***One: geo-politicizing international economics***

To create the meaning from which APEC can be viewed as an interstate organization

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<sup>4</sup> Arif Dirlik, ‘Introducing the Pacific’, in *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*, ed. Arif Dirlik (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 4. See also Dirlik’s earlier piece, ‘The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure’, *Journal of World History*, 3, no. 1 (1992), 55-79, and Mark T. Berger and Douglas A. Borer, ‘Introduction: The Rise of East Asia: Critical Visions of the Pacific Century’, in *The Rise of East Asia: Critical Visions of the Pacific Century*, eds. Mark T. Berger and Douglas A. Borer (London: Routledge, 1997), 1-33.

<sup>5</sup> On the ‘APEC Way’ see notably Yoichi Funabashi, *Asia Pacific Fusion: Japan’s Role in APEC* (Washington: Institute for International Economics, 1995).

cooperating on economic issues, the primal reality of international relations must remain conflict. To enable this, the formal and practical discourse deploys a variety of discursive manoeuvres which seek to locate conflict in some recent turn of events in order to set the initial terrain for the possibility of cooperation among states in the Asia-Pacific. Most often, it plays itself out in such ominous terms as:

The near-continuous eruption of political strife around the globe has diminished hopes for post-Cold War harmony as nation-states and other international actors pursue self-interests amid tension and uncertainty. Perhaps the most unsettling characteristic of the mid-1990s is the nonexistence of international rules of the game, the absence of an operative code of conduct that can set limits on behavior and encourage cooperation on the basis of rational self-interest.<sup>6</sup>

Along with the end of the Cold War, two other dominant accounts of the source of conflict are found in the formal and practical discourse: increased (post-hegemonic) U.S. unilateralism, and the rise of Asian 'economic dynamism' in a world of increased 'economic interdependence'.<sup>7</sup> These three interrelated sources of conflict form what, following David Campbell one could call a 'discourse of danger', that is a discourse which uses a negative system of difference (fear, uncertainty, disorder, irrationality) to create the terrain of conflict from which the positive contraposition, cooperation among states, can acquire certainty, order, and rationality.<sup>8</sup> It is through a discourse of danger and the negative system of difference it creates that interstate cooperation becomes a possibility and is

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<sup>6</sup> Peter H. Smith, 'Introduction: Cooperation or Rivalry? Issues and Themes', in *Cooperation or Rivalry?*, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Take for instance Charles Morrison's assessment. "A number of economic and political factors in the 1970s and 1980s converged to set the stage for the establishment of a broad-based regional economic cooperation organization. Of these, three stand out: the region's economic growth, the related growth of Asia-Pacific economic interdependence and fear of protectionism, and the shift of political and diplomatic forces associated with the end of the Cold War." Charles E. Morrison, 'APEC: The Evolution of an Institution', in *Asia-Pacific Crossroads*, 5.

<sup>8</sup> David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 54.

assigned meaning since it is only through a discourse of danger that the constitutive outside of cooperation, conflict, is made possible. My objective in this first-section therefore, is to highlight how discourses of danger are articulated in order to create the negative terrain from which the interstate economic cooperation embodied in APEC is given meaning. More specifically, I intend to show how this creation of meaning allows APEC to become seen as rational choice in dealing with the fear, uncertainty, disorder, and irrationality of what is viewed as the latent immutable reality of IR: conflict. In a manner similar to the way the arms race became an accepted and legitimate part of the drive to avoid disorder and gain bipolar stability during the Cold War, international economic cooperation in the form of policy coordination among states becomes seen as a legitimate part of avoiding world economic uncertainty and instability in a post-Cold War environment.

Signifying the Cold War as dangerous was easy. Indeed, in many respects it was *the* ideal (con)text in which the deployment of discourses of danger within IR achieved the status of fixed immutable structures circumscribing the possibility of international politics subsequent to World War II. The more that danger acquired the status of fixity and tangibility the more the means through which avoidance of that danger, military and nuclear buildup, was a justifiable objective and a reasonable component of the practice of international politics. In this sense, the dangerous (con)text of the Cold War was the primary ground from which the apparent stability of a bipolar world<sup>9</sup> (assumed to be the outcome of military buildup and the politics of deterrence) could be

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<sup>9</sup> As Zaki Laïdi quoting Robert MacNamara points out, the stability was indeed only apparent when one considers that over 40 million people died in so-called 'regional conflicts' during the cold war. Quoted in Zaki Laïdi, *L'ordre mondial relâché: sens et puissance après la guerre froide* (Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques/ Berg Publishers, 1992), 15, fn.1.

imagined. Seen discursively, it is not the immutable anarchical dangerous world of superpower rivalry that produced the Cold War, it is the Cold War discursive economy of balance of power, military deterrence, and foreign threat among other discursive manoeuvres, which (re)produced the dangerous anarchical bipolar world centred around territorially defined states. Although the end of the Cold War did open more clearly the possibility of questioning the geo-political world of IR as immutably dangerous, it did not put an end to the practice of creating discourses of danger. Danger, it would seem, merely navigated elsewhere as witnessed by the host of new national security issues which have had the effect of 'redefining' or rather, relocating the 'zero sum security dilemma'.<sup>10</sup>

Among these new security issues international economic relations read through the prism of geo-economics was quickly and easily substituted for the geo-politics of the Cold War. As Gearóid Ó Tuathail argues despite the end of the dangerous (con)text that gave meaning to geopolitics, those who read geo-economics as part of the new security issues of interstate relations failed to abandon the discourse of danger of the Cold War and succeeded in securitizing the world of international economic relations.

They [those who read geo-economics with the geo-political gaze] write "new" national security jeremiads with old script lines in an effort to revitalize the society of security and perpetuate the culture of the cold war despite the end of the Cold War as a historical period. The Cold War may be dead, but cold war strategic culture and its society of security is undead.<sup>11</sup>

Within this context, geo-political or geo-strategic discursive practices, such as those surrounding the notion of 'national security' are superimposed upon economic issues which are consequently

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<sup>10</sup> See for instance Jessica Tuchman Mathews, 'Redefining Security', *Foreign Affairs*, 68, no. 2 (1989), 162-177.

<sup>11</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 231.

perceived as ‘conflict ridden’ since they seemingly occur in the anarchical world of international relations in which states inherently pursue their own self interest. The series of equivalences that applied to a geo-political world are now applied to international economic relations. Geo-economic reasoning reads international economic issues through the prism of a zero sum game: the gains of one state are seen as the losses of another.<sup>12</sup> As if hidden by the Cold War, economics thus becomes part of the national interests of states, now worthy of ‘high politics’ status.<sup>13</sup> Substituting the military and ideological conflict of geo-politics, the securitization of economics enables signifying the world of international economic relations as marked by the inherent, if latent, possibility of ‘economic warfare’ and ‘trade wars’. Within the post-Cold War geo-economic reasoning, the traditional militaristic measures of state power and national security are thus increasingly being substituted for, among other things, notions of territorially defined economic competitiveness and technological superiority. In this sense, geo-economic reasoning conveys an image of territorially defined homogeneity to ‘economic interest’ by drawing an equivalence to traditional understandings of ‘national interests’ defended by the state, such as a country’s territorial integrity and defence against external aggression. The state is assumed to have the same degree of sovereignty in the world of

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<sup>12</sup> A particular striking and succinct example of this form of reasoning can be found in the writings of Edward N. Luttwak, ‘From Geo-politics to Geo-economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce’ reproduced in *The Geopolitical Reader*, eds. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge (London: Routledge, 1998), 125-130.

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to look at how at the time of ‘post-hegemony’ certain authors have (re)written the history of international relations in order to script in economics as part of the measures of state power and as a component of the immutable and immemorial structuring of interstate relations and national interest. See for example Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 3-4. At the outset of his book, Gilpin writes: “Economic factors have played an important role in international relations throughout history. Economic objectives, resources, and instruments of foreign policy have always been significant elements in the struggles among political groups. It is unlikely that, in Homeric times, Helen’s face- contributing factor though it may well have been- was the primary reason for launching a thousand ships and causing King Agamemnon to lay siege to Troy. More likely, the Greeks’ crucial motive was their desire to seize control of the lucrative trade route that passed through the Dardanelles.”

interstate economic relations as it did in the world of strategic issues. In short, the geo-political imaginary of an interstate world is conscripted for the imagining of international economic relations, and the effect is to imbue the international world of economics with danger. Geo-economic reasoning therefore leaves intact and reinforces the Cold War imaginary of an interstate world of inside/ outside, sovereignty/ anarchy, self/ other, friend/ enemy and solves these problématiques with the same ontological and epistemological commitments despite the end of what informed their (con)text, i.e., the Cold War. As such, the discourse of danger constitutive of the Cold War created for itself new ground in geo-economics and enabled the continuation of such apocalyptic claims that “[t]he end of the Cold War could sharply heighten the prospect of trade war.”<sup>14</sup>

Arguably, nowhere is this discourse of danger of geo-economics more poignant than in the imagined Asia-Pacific as the opening quote to this chapter suggests. Indeed, this may be *the* (con)text for geo-economic danger seen to be almost equivalent with the geo-political danger of the East/ West Cold War rivalry. Within a geo-economic reasoning, the arrival of the ‘Pacific Century’ headed by Japan’s ‘economic miracle’ with the ‘economic dynamism’ of the ‘mini dragons’ and ‘little tigers’ following closely behind, is easily read as replacing the geo-political conflict of the Cold War with a new geo-economic conflict. Resuscitating old imaginaries of IR about global tectonic shifts in world orders, the arrival of the ‘Pacific Century’ is equated with the arrival of ‘Pax Americana’ subsequent to World War II (itself replacing the ‘Pax Britannica’) while placing the

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<sup>14</sup> C. Fred Bergsten quoted in Smith, ‘Introduction: Cooperation or Rivalry? Issues and Themes’, 2.

locus of the shift at the level of economic power.<sup>15</sup> Within this context of shifting world order generated by the ‘economic dynamism’, the most symptomatic form of dangerous geo-economic reasoning is to be found in the manner in which the economic relationship between the United States and Japan, imagined as the two most powerful territorially defined economies in the world,<sup>16</sup> has been read as one of ‘super economy rivalry’.<sup>17</sup> Defining them as economic rivals has enabled the deployment of Cold War imaginaries despite the added dimension ‘economic interdependence’. Such geo-economic reasoning is easy to find in the formal discourse.

Japan’s economic relationship with the United States is so close that much of the American budget deficit is financed by Japan. In return, the openness of the American market has made Japan’s economic miracle possible. The relationship between the two nations is aptly described as one of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)- in the event of an economic war, either country could destroy the other’s economy.<sup>18</sup>

Interstate economic warfare of a magnitude similar to the MAD of nuclear war, irrespective of its illogicality, draws an equivalence between economics, national interest, and a territorially defined interstate world predicated upon inherent conflict. This kind of geo-economic reading of U.S./ Japanese relations generally falls within the 1980s envisioning of a ‘post-hegemonic’ world order

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<sup>15</sup> On this form of reading see in particular Robert Gilpin, ‘International Politics in the Pacific Rim Era’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 505 (September, 1989), 56-67.

<sup>16</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, ‘‘Pearl Harbour Without Bombs’’: A Critical Geopolitics of the U.S.-Japan ‘FSX’ Debate’, *Environment and Planning A*, 24, no. 7 (1992), 976. See also David Campbell, ‘Foreign Policy and Identity: Japanese ‘Other’/ American ‘Self’’, in *The Global Economy as Political Space*, eds. Stephen J. Rosow, Naem Inayatullah, and Mark Rupert (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), 147-169. See also Kawasaki Tsuyoshi, ‘Le discours politique des relations économiques nippo-américaines: l’énigme mise en évidence par Komiya’, *Revue Etudes Internationales*, XXX, no. 1, 1999, 45-66.

<sup>17</sup> Within APEC, the U.S. and Japan make up approximately 80 percent of the total measurable GDP.

<sup>18</sup> Gerald Segal, ‘A Pacific Century?’, in *Dilemmas of World Politics*, eds. John Baylis and N.J. Rengger (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 414.

marked by 'U.S. economic decline'<sup>19</sup> and rising Japanese economic dynamism.<sup>20</sup> It is from here that the rise of U.S. unilateralism is most often read since it is seen as a reactive attempt to protect U.S. economic sectors from 'unfair' aggressive foreign competitors and market predators and their 'unfair trade practices'. Used as the statistical confirmation that the 'Japanese' had to be 'unfair traders' was the huge U.S. trade deficits, not only with Japan but also with Korea, Taiwan and later China.<sup>21</sup> From this reading of American/ Japanese economic relations the practice of politics of U.S. foreign policy initiated an entire array of measures meant to 'level the playing field'.<sup>22</sup> These measures ranged from the general [Special and Super 301; Voluntary Export Restraints (VERs); Orderly Marketing Agreements (OMAs); Voluntary Import Expansion (VIE) agreements), to the more specific sector oriented 'leveling' (the 1986 Semiconductor Agreement; the elimination of General System of Preferences; the 1985 Plaza Accord; the 1985 Market-Oriented Sector-Selective

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<sup>19</sup> Paul Kennedy's 'The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers' remains emblematic. See Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> The 'rise and fall' debate in the United States also informed a body of 'revisionist literature' which began to see Japan no longer as an ally but as a political and economic threat. Among these revisionist were the authors who became known as the 'Gang of Four': Clyde Prestowitz, who worked as U.S. Commerce Department trade negotiator with Japan, James Fallows, editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Karl van Wolferen, a journalist and author, and Chalmers Johnson, a professor of international relations at the University of California, San Diego. See Ó Tuathail, 'Pearl Harbor Without Bombs': A Critical Geopolitics of the U.S.-Japan 'FSX' Debate', 976. See also the Gang of Four's response to their critics James Fallows and al., 'Beyond Japan-Bashing: The 'Gang of Four' Defends the Revisionist Line', *U.S. News and World Report*, (May 7, 1990), 54-55.

<sup>21</sup> According to IMF numbers, by 1990 the official U.S. trade deficit with all APEC members at the time was 98 billion dollars, approximately 80 percent of the total American trade deficit. Numbers adapted from Hadi Soesastro, 'Implications of the Post-Cold War Politico-Security Environment for the Pacific', in *Pacific Dynamism and the International Economic System*, 374 .

<sup>22</sup> Not all quarters of American foreign policy circles agreed with these measures since for some it went against the 'free market' gospel. See in particular the policy stance of the CATO Institute Center for Trade Policy Studies. As it relates to American/ Japanese economic relations see Scott Latham, 'Market Opening or Corporate Welfare? 'Results-Oriented' Trade Policy Towards Japan', *Policy Analysis*, no. 252 (April 15, 1996), Brink Lindsey and Aaron Lukas, 'Revisiting the 'Revisionists': The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Economic Model', *Trade Policy Analysis*, no. 3 (July 31, 1998). - <http://www.freetrade.org/index.html> -

(MOSS) talks under the Reagan administration; the 1989 Structural Impediments Initiative (SII) under the Bush administration; and the 1993 Clinton Administration's U.S.-Japan Framework for a New Economic Partnership].<sup>23</sup> As Campbell has shown through his work on foreign policy, in order to initiate these measures it became imperative for U.S. foreign policy to create 'East Asian economies' as a unified foreign threat.<sup>24</sup> To do so it accessed a readily available World War II imaginary from which a dangerous 'Asian other' could be envisioned.

The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 stood for many as a symbol of deviousness and the willingness to transgress the 'normal' bounds of civilized war. Throughout the war, the image of the conniving, scheming, and untrustworthy Japanese was everywhere. In the post-war period, particularly in recent times, the cry of 'unfair' trading practices has tapped into this well-established interpretation. The greater the economic success of the Japanese the greater the willingness of many competitors to suggest that this success can only be attributed to deviousness.<sup>25</sup>

This post-Cold War geo-economic discourse of danger informs the predominant vantage point from which the Asia-Pacific and the 'Pacific Century' is read. Where the post-Cold War production of danger through geo-economic reasoning becomes particularly relevant for this chapter however, is when it has led to the possibility of creating a second discourse of danger, one which has foundational status for APEC.

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<sup>23</sup> At least in one case measures meant to 'level the playing field' succeeded. As Walden Bello notes "Washington subjected Seoul to a broad-front trade offensive that was much tougher than the one directed at Japan [...] Hemmed in on all fronts, Korea saw its 1987 trade surplus of \$9.6 billion with the U.S.A. turn into a deficit of \$159 million in 1992. By 1996, the deficit with the U.S.A had grown to over \$4 billion, and Korea's overall trade deficit hit \$21 billion." Walden Bello, 'East Asia: On the Eve of the Great Transformation?', *Review of International Political Economy*, 5, no. 3 (1998) 424-444. 431. Bello argues that U.S. unilateral measures against Korea were contributing factors to Korea's financial collapse in 1997.

<sup>24</sup> Campbell, 'Japanese 'Other'/ American 'Self', 156. '*Foreign policy*' refers to "all relationships of otherness, practices of differentiation, or modes of exclusion that constitute their objects as foreign in the process of dealing with them." This understanding follows what I have developed in Chapter Three. Whereas 'Foreign Policy' is a state-based practice as it is conventionally understood in international relations. *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>25</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, 233.

Somewhat paradoxically, the end of the Cold War discourse of danger prevalent in the United States becomes *itself* an object of danger within the dominant narrative from which APEC is read and to which its own discourse contributes. This second geo-economic discourse stems from how the danger is located not at the level of 'unfair trading practices', or a shifting of economic power as was the case above. Rather, the predominant danger for the 'Asia-Pacific economy' stems from the perception that viewing Japanese or East Asian economic dynamism as a danger in U.S. foreign policy, as well as elsewhere, threatens the liberal multilateral trading regime by one of its chief players in favour of, among other things, aggressive economic unilateralism and so-called 'managed trade'. In other words, the first geo-economic discourse of danger produces a second geo-economic danger. The rise of U.S. economic unilateralism, the perception of a failing Uruguay Round, the movement towards 'economic blocs' in Europe and North America, and the changing balance of economic power between Euro-America and the 'Pacific', all of which are seen as tightly interrelated, were from the onset the primary elements of danger informing the need and the possibility of economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>26</sup> Read as mounting 'protectionism', these events of the mid to late 1980s are components of the foundational narrative of APEC to the extent that they constituted the dangerous 'other' of economic liberalism and its international regimes. It is seen as particularly dangerous for the Asia-Pacific since it is commonly held in the formal discourse that "[p]erhaps no countries have a bigger interest in efforts to sustain and extend the GATT trade rules, and in becoming the exemplars of a liberal

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<sup>26</sup> Among the first articles in the formal discourse dealing specifically with APEC and the reasons for its creation are Stuart Harris, 'Regional Economic Cooperation, Trading Blocs and Australian Interests', *Australian Outlook*, 43, no. 2 (1989), 16-24, Elek, 'Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC)', 33-48, and Crone, 'The Politics of Emerging Pacific Cooperation', 68-83.

international trade regime, than do the Pacific countries.”<sup>27</sup> And by extension “[a]ll members of APEC have a very strong interest in the preservation of an open and rules-based international economy, for it has served them well.”<sup>28</sup> Indeed, “their sustained growth has been due to a relatively open multilateral trading system which has prevailed during recent decades [and] it has made it possible for Japan and other Western Pacific economies to exploit their comparative advantage.”<sup>29</sup>

This belief in the liberal international trade regime as the context responsible for the unprecedented economic growth in the region is echoed in each of the leaders’ declaration and ministerial joint statements of APEC. It was emphasized in the first ministerial joint statement in 1989 and was included in the 1991 Seoul APEC declaration which sets out the objectives and founding principles of the organization.<sup>30</sup> In fact, elements of this second discourse of danger are pervasive in APEC’s official declarations and statements,<sup>31</sup> as well as in the reports of its more prominent advisory bodies. Most notably, each of the three reports produced by APEC’s EPG in the first half of the 1990s began by highlighting the “threats to the region”,<sup>32</sup> which reproduces the

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<sup>27</sup> Drysdale, *International Economic Pluralism: Economic Policy in East Asia and the Pacific*, 221.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew MacIntyre and Nancy Viviani, ‘APEC Revisited’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 46, no. 2 (1992), i.

<sup>29</sup> Elek, ‘APEC- Motives Objectives and Prospects’, 161.

<sup>30</sup> APEC, ‘Joint Statement: Third Ministerial Meeting’, Seoul, Korea, (November 12-14, 1991).

<sup>31</sup> The first ministerial joint statement states: “Minister also noted some potential threats to further growth and to the further productive interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies. The positive trends of recent years could be disrupted if, instead of continued willingness to undertake structural change, there were to be increased resort to protectionism and if instead of positive joint international action to further liberalise trade, there were to be increased resort to retaliatory or defensive measures.” APEC, ‘Joint Statement: First Ministerial Meeting, Canberra, Australia, November 6-7, 1989’ (Singapore: APEC secretariat, 1989).

<sup>32</sup> APEC, *A Vision for APEC: Towards an Asia Pacific Economic Community. Report of the Eminent Persons Group to APEC Ministers* (Singapore: APEC secretariat, 1993), 15-19; APEC, *Achieving the APEC Vision: Free and Open Trade in the Asia Pacific. Second Report of the Eminent Persons Group* (Singapore: APEC secretariat, 1994), 6-13; and APEC, *Implementing the APEC Vision. Third Report of the Eminent Persons Group* (Singapore: APEC

second discourse of danger highlighted above. Indeed, in the opening paragraphs of each of these reports offering recommendations as to the future direction of APEC<sup>33</sup> there is considerable time spent highlighting the dangers which “threaten the environment that has permitted, indeed facilitated, the economic boom of the past three decades in the Asia-Pacific.”<sup>34</sup> In 1993, those included rising “process protectionism” (i.e., antidumping and countervailing duties), “inward looking regionalism” (NAFTA, and the EU), and bilateral trade disputes in particular between the U.S. and Japan (the first discourse of danger identified earlier). The report made the threats even more ‘threatening’ by suggesting that the multilateral venue for addressing them, i.e., the Uruguay Round, was faltering. In 1994, when the Uruguay Round was in view of completion, the report found that the threats had not disappeared: the Uruguay Round did not go far enough (particularly in investment and services) and could not provide grounds for slowing “protectionist pressures”. Inward looking regionalism was expanding, and bilateral trade disputes continued unabated.<sup>35</sup> Finally, in 1995 the “risks to the region” were so serious that the report urged “forceful implementation of the Bogor commitments” to create a free trade area in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>36</sup> It would seem that bilateral disputes between the United States and Japan had escalated and only nearly “averted the largest trade war of the postwar period.”<sup>37</sup> The “remedy to the threats to

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secretariat, 1995), 3-6.

<sup>33</sup> The 1993 report recommended ‘free trade within the region’ which formed the basis for the 1994 Bogor ‘free and open trade and investment’ declaration made by APEC heads of state. As such, the EPG reports had significant influence on APEC’s agenda.

<sup>34</sup> APEC, *A Vision for APEC*, 15.

<sup>35</sup> APEC, *Achieving the APEC Vision*, 8-12.

<sup>36</sup> APEC, *Implementing the APEC Vision*, 3.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

continued prosperity and stability in the region” contends the report is “prompt and effective implementation”<sup>38</sup> of the free and open trade and investment commitments set out in Bogor by APEC members.

The discourse of danger found in the beginning of each of these reports is a striking caricature of how conflict must precede cooperation in order for the latter to have any meaning. Because the discourse of danger is the constitutive outside to interstate economic cooperation, any attempt at cooperation such as that found in APEC must ultimately remain a failure, contaminated by the conflict it needs to delimit its field of meaning. The threat must always remain. If what constituted the threat is no longer possible, e.g., the faltering GATT negotiations, then the threat is merely located elsewhere. In this sense, it is only by means of the first geo-economic discourse of danger which creates the post-Cold War uncertainty, disorder, irrationality and conflict by geopoliticizing economics that the second danger for the Asia-Pacific could be envisioned, i.e., the dangerous ‘other’ of the international liberal trading regime. And it is only from the negative system of difference which this second discourse of geo-economic danger creates that the positive contraposition of ‘Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation’ can be envisioned. The discourse of danger of geo-economic reasoning constitutes the fundamental reality which economic cooperation among Asia-Pacific states struggles to maintain at bay. In a manner similar to the way that the dangerous (con)text of the Cold War had to be performatively created in order to view nuclear buildup, deterrence, and balance of power strategies as a legitimate part of the practice of international politics, it is only once dangerous geo-economic reasoning is deployed that APEC can be viewed as a legitimate and rational outcome of the practice of politics in the Asia-Pacific. As such, a

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 6.

discourse of danger, such as the one surrounding the rise of (U.S.) ‘protectionism’ when APEC was created or the risks associated with the failure of the Uruguay Round highlighted by the EPG reports, is constitutive of the possibility of cooperation and must be located in order to give any meaning to the latter.

In the context of the late 1980s post-hegemonic and post-Cold War world where “U.S. hegemony in the Pacific has been reduced by the rapid relative growth of Japan and the NIEs [new industrializing economies] and by their extensive system of mutual economic linkages” and where consequently “the order maintained by U.S. power devolved toward uncertainty and chaos”,<sup>39</sup> Asia-Pacific economic cooperation lays its foundation by deploying a geo-economic discourse of danger which largely resuscitates the discursive economy of the Cold War. Only after interstate economic relations are geo-politicized can the post-Cold War world economy be seen as marked by disorder, instability, and irrationality. Once this is done, then the substance of economic cooperation no longer really matters since the terrain of cooperation is *a priori* delimited by order, stability and rationality.

### ***Two: Cooperation/ conflict***

From the very first ministerial meeting in Canberra in 1989, APEC has been viewed through the prism of international organizations and more specifically from the 1980s’ ahistorical rendition of this prism, regime theory.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, APEC quickly became an occasion to strengthen

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<sup>39</sup> Crone, ‘Does Hegemony Matter?’, 512.

<sup>40</sup> In his historiography, Brian Schmidt remarks on how the literature on ‘international regimes’ fails to acknowledge the history of the study international organizations within the field. See Brian Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 190.

what was, and continues to be seen by many, as the current state of theory in IR while applying the latter to a new part of the world where interstate regimes, or at least some form of the latter, were seen as relatively few in comparison to Europe and North America.<sup>41</sup> Barry Buzan for instance has remarked that “[w]hat is remarkable about Asia is its combination of several quite highly industrialised societies, with a regional international society so impoverished in its development that it compares poorly with even Africa and the Middle East. Effective multilateralism is virtually absent.”<sup>42</sup> As I will argue later, this absence of interstate regimes becomes particularly relevant for the formal discourse’s attempt to navigate from a realist imaginary (that is, one marked by the immutability of anarchy and the problems this reality engenders for interstate cooperative behaviour) towards governing norms and principles that constrain state behaviour, i.e., an interstate regime. Put simply, the ‘Asia-Pacific’ when viewed through neo-liberal institutionalism is understood to be an important test for regime theory since ‘anarchy’, or the absence of supranational governing norms and principles for states, is seen as historically much more evident.

By redeploying the ontological as well as epistemological commitments of some form of game theory which underlies regime theory, APEC is to be seen as the creation of self

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<sup>41</sup> Most of the neo-liberal institutionalist strand of the formal discourse on APEC deploys either explicitly or implicitly a form of regime analysis. Explicitly Richard A. Higgott, Andrew Fenton Cooper and Janelle Bonnor, ‘Asia-Pacific Cooperation: An Evolving Case-Study in Leadership and Co-operation Building’, *International Journal*, XLV, (Autumn 1990), 823-866, Crone, ‘Does Hegemony Matter?’, 501-525, Vinod K. Aggarwal, ‘Building International Institutions in Asia-Pacific’, *Asian Survey*, 33, no. 11 (1993), 1029-1042. See also the following edited volumes *Asia-Pacific Crossroads: Regime Creation and the Future of APEC*, eds. Aggarwal and Morrison, *Pacific Cooperation: Building Economic and Security Regimes in the Asia-Pacific Region*, eds. Mack and Ravenhill, *Pacific Economic Relations in the 1990s: Cooperation or Conflict?*, eds. Higgott, Leaver, and Ravenhill.

<sup>42</sup> Buzan goes on to state in a classic realist discourse that “Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is the most developed of the economic groupings, but it shows few signs of becoming anything more than an unwieldy Pacific summit. Japan and the United States are keen to ensure that such regionalism does not develop too far as they fear that its success would mean less openness in the global market economy.” Barry Buzan, ‘The Post-Cold War Asia-Pacific Security Order: Conflict or Cooperation?’ in *Pacific Cooperation*, 150.

interested states (presumably meaning state representatives) capable of a rational cost/ benefit analysis in a world conditioned by anarchy. A whole host of benefits which outweighed the costs were quickly fastened to APEC. This reflects the underlying assumption within the formal discourse that cooperation among states in the realm of international economics has positive consequences for people.<sup>43</sup> As we will see later, this normative view of international economic cooperation goes as far as to allow the substitution of the conflict ridden 'zero sum prisoner's dilemma' analogy of international relations with a new "positive sum prisoner's delight" analogy.<sup>44</sup>

Most often what is understood as the 'benefits' are the numerous and varying degrees to which APEC contributes to strengthening what is seen as the international liberal trading regime, that is the "governing arrangements or principles, norms, rules and procedures for handling issues in international economic relations."<sup>45</sup> The emphasis is placed on the international liberal trading regime since it is argued that "the growth and strength of the Pacific economy in the past three decades were built within the framework of multilateral trading arrangements and ties provided by the GATT, underwritten by the leadership role played by the United States." As such, "East Asian

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<sup>43</sup> Although as Ralph Pettman notes real living human beings are rarely part of the discourse of regime theory. See Ralph Pettman, 'State Cooperation in The Pacific Region', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 37, no. 1 (1996).

<sup>44</sup> According to its users, this analogy would mean that "each country's own success in internationally oriented economic growth depends on its own trade liberalization." See Ross Garnaut and Peter Drysdale, 'East Asia in the International System: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Challenge of Discriminatory Trade' in *Sustaining Export-Oriented Development: Ideas for East Asia*, eds. Ross Garnaut, Enzo Grilli and James Riedel, (Hong Kong: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 133. See also Peter Drysdale and Ross Garnaut, 'The Pacific: An Application of a General Theory of Economic Integration', in *Pacific Dynamism and the International Economic System*, 183-224. On the 'prisoner's dilemma' analogy see Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1984).

<sup>45</sup> Charles E. Morrison, 'APEC: The Evolution of an Institution', *Asia-Pacific Crossroads*, 2. Morrison merely reuses the definition that Krasner had developed at the beginning of the 1980s. See Stephen D. Krasner, 'Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables', in *International Regimes*, ed. Stephen D. Krasner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 1.

and Western Pacific countries have strong interests in ensuring that economic policy efforts are directed towards support for the maintenance of an open, non-discriminatory (GATT-based) trade and economic regime.<sup>46</sup> Maintaining the “collective benefits of an open international economic system”<sup>47</sup> continues to be viewed as the primary objective of regional interstate cooperation and has been the cornerstone of the creation of APEC’s discourse on ‘open regionalism’ (which will be explored later in this chapter). Within this context, APEC’s success or failure is most often measured in terms of its ability to contribute to fostering the gains of increased regional/ global trade and financial integration. On this, the debate has raged and has fuelled the formal discourse since most assessments of APEC’s success are confronted with what is read as the stated ambitions of APEC and what is judged as the organization’s ‘practical achievements’.<sup>48</sup>

When read as a regional economic regime meant to strengthen the ‘benefits of an open international economic system’, what conditions the oscillation between the success or failure of APEC is the belief in the existence of a more fundamental reality than cooperation. As was argued in the previous section, without this more fundamental reality, cooperation among states would be void of meaning. Indeed, even though cooperation is to be viewed as more common, it still functions as an exception and not a norm since for the formal discourse, and in particular neo-liberal institutionalism, it is something that can only be ‘*learned*’, thereby conveying the notion that the more fundamental reality of the interstate world from which learning begins is marked by something

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<sup>46</sup> Drysdale, *International Economic Pluralism*, 76.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Higgott, ‘The Pacific and Beyond: APEC, ASEM and Regional Economic Management’, in *Economic Dynamism in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Grahame Thompson (London: Routledge in association with the Open University, 1998), 337.

<sup>48</sup> See for instance the collection of assessments in *Whither APEC? The Progress to Date and Agenda for the Future*.

other than cooperation, more specifically, cooperation's 'other', conflict. That cooperation must be 'learned' is at the heart of neo-liberal institutionalism's deployment of the discourse surrounding 'epistemic communities'.<sup>49</sup> States need to learn the norms and principles of appropriate cooperative behaviour, particularly in the Asia-Pacific where, as was suggested by Buzan above, states are seen as having no strong common history of interstate cooperation. Within this context, it is believed that 'epistemic communities' (most often Peter Haas's definition<sup>50</sup>) can provide the ideas from which that cooperative behaviour is informed. It has been relatively easy for neo-liberal institutionalism to find evidence of 'epistemic communities' within APEC's organizational structure. Aside from the more prominent bodies such as the now defunct EPG and the current ABAC, the Pacific-Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), one of the central networking points for Asia-Pacific academics, politicians, and business people since the early 1980s, has had observer status within APEC from the first ministerial meeting in Canberra. In 1993, APEC also initiated the creation of 'APEC Study Centers' which now are located in over 70 universities throughout APEC members. These centres focus on policy relevant research for APEC. Even outside of readings of APEC through the

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<sup>49</sup> This has been a major part of Richard Higgott's work on APEC. Borrowing from Peter Haas, Higgott has sought to apply the 'epistemic community' literature to APEC in order to argue that states have the ability to learn how to cooperate using the ideas and normative commitments developed by regional epistemic communities. International regimes based on these ideas and normative commitments are understood as providing frameworks to constrain state behaviour. See Higgott, 'The Pacific and Beyond', 333-355, Richard Higgott, 'Mondialisation et gouvernance: l'émergence du niveau régional', *Politique étrangère*, no.2, 62nd year (Summer 1997), pp.277-292, Richard Higgott, 'APEC- A Sceptical View', in *Pacific Cooperation*, 66-97, Richard Higgott, 'Competing Theoretical Approaches to International Cooperation: Implications for the Asia-Pacific', in *Pacific Economic Relations in the 1990s*, 290-311, Richard Higgott, 'Pacific Economic Cooperation and Australia: Some Questions about the Role of Knowledge and Learning', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 46, no. 2 (1992), 182-197. With regards to Haas see 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', in *International Organization*, 46, no. 1 (1992), 1-35. See also MacIntyre and Viviani, 'APEC Revisited', i-v.

<sup>50</sup> Haas defines epistemic communities as "a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area." See Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', 3.

discursive stance of neo-liberal institutionalism's notion of 'epistemic communities', there is an overwhelming belief that at the very least, APEC is a learning process among states where communication and information exchange occurs.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the discourse surrounding the contention that APEC may represent an 'Asian view' of interstate cooperation where we find a "distinctive East and Southeast Asian approach to doing business, revolving around informal flexible 'network-based' economies rooted in social relations",<sup>52</sup> generally views APEC as an instance of countries with disparate cultural, social, and political backgrounds 'getting to know each other better' the 'APEC way'.<sup>53</sup> As the first interstate regional organization which is meant to deal with economic issues, most APEC boosters, as well as its few sceptics, agree that this is at a

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<sup>51</sup> Lawrence Woods for instance characterizes the entire diplomacy of 'Pacific economic cooperation' as a move towards "improved forms of cooperation, communication, and consultation on economic policy issues", Lawrence T. Woods, *Asia-Pacific Diplomacy: Nongovernmental Organizations and International Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), 4. See also Manfred Mols who argues that APEC may be a form of regional integration which is limited to "fostering communication and cooperation". Manfred Mols, 'Regional Integration and the International System', in *Cooperation or Rivalry?*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Nicole Gallant and Richard Stubbs, 'APEC's Dilemmas: Institution-Building around the Pacific Rim', *Pacific Affairs*, 70, no. 2 (1997), 206. On similar arguments that there may be a distinct 'Asian' form of economic cooperation based on informal networking and consensus building and that this may be present in APEC see *APEC: Cooperation from Diversity*, eds. Ippei Yamazawa and Akira Hirata (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies Symposium Proceedings No. 16, 1996), and Funabashi, *Asia Pacific Fusion*.

<sup>53</sup> The notion of an 'APEC way' became particularly prevalent when the Japanese government was the APEC chair during 1995. It was at this moment that the notion of an 'Asian view' appeared more prominently in APEC's discourse which led in part to the creation of the notion of an 'APEC way'. Invoking cultural difference, the 'APEC way' meant a preference for 'Eastern' informal means of cooperation and development. See Mark T. Berger, 'The Triumph of the East? The East Asian Miracle and Post-Cold War Capitalism' in *The Rise of East Asia: Critical Visions of the Pacific Century*, 260-287, and Mark T. Berger, 'A New East-West Synthesis? APEC and the Competing Narratives of Regional Integration in the Post-Cold War Asia-Pacific', *Alternatives*, 23, no. 1 (1998), 1-28. On the manner in which 'Asian values' are essentialized and deployed as a political discourse see Richard Robison, 'The Politics of 'Asian Values'', *The Pacific Review*, 9, no. 3 (1996), 309-327, and Garry Rodan, 'The Internationalization of Ideological Conflict: Asia's New Significance', *The Pacific Review*, 9, no. 3 (1996) 328-351. On the manner in which 'Asianess' has been imagined to imbue the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) with the appearance of a non-Western view of regional economic cooperation see Richard Higgott and Richard Stubbs, 'Competing Conceptions of Economic Regionalism: APEC versus EAEC in the Asia Pacific', *Review of International Political Economy*, 2, no. 3 (1995), 516-535.

minimum a forum of information exchange and diplomatic relations building. From here, the conclusion is drawn that “APEC is historically important in the context of the development of the Asia-Pacific region, and theoretically interesting in that it offers theoretical support for neoliberal institutional analysis”<sup>54</sup> since it offers evidence of cooperative behaviour on the part of states.

There is no doubt that when reading the formal discourse on APEC we find ourselves well entrenched in the imaginary of an interstate world and the practice of politics it engenders, and on occasion this is even obliquely acknowledged by the more enlightened quarters of this discourse.<sup>55</sup> What is more interesting however, is the manner through which the neo-liberal institutionalist strand of this discourse navigates from the dominant discursive economy of this imaginary, i.e., a realist anarchical world, towards the interstate cooperative world it overtly favours. Only once this manoeuvre is accomplished can APEC be viewed as a positive outcome, the result of a learning process among states. One manner through which this route is mapped is by deploying a particular envisioning of the Hobbesian state of nature/ society hierarchical dichotomy.<sup>56</sup> The envisioning of APEC as an outcome of some form of state learning of cooperative behaviour draws upon the same equivalences that one can find in Hobbes’s dichotomy, or more precisely the

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<sup>54</sup> Higgott, ‘Competing Theoretical Approaches to International Cooperation’, 310. More recently, Higgott has suggested that “East Asian regional organizations are geared to *sovereignty enhancement* not sovereignty pooling. APEC is determined not to replicate the institutional structures of the EU.” See Higgott, ‘The Pacific and Beyond’, 343. This seems to be an indirect acknowledgement of the performative role APEC plays in constituting the discourse of sovereignty for its members.

<sup>55</sup> Higgott, ‘Competing Theoretical Approaches to International Cooperation’, 310-311.

<sup>56</sup> On the manner in which this dichotomy informs neo-realist ontologies of IPE see Naeem Inayatullah and Mark Rupert, ‘Hobbes, Smith, and the Problem of Mixed Ontologies in Neorealist IPE’, in *The Global Economy as Political Space*, 61-85.

imaginary the latter invokes. Here states (again presumably state representatives<sup>57</sup>) are in that eternal fight against their presocial Hobbesian human nature of self-preservation and self-interest. The move towards Hobbes's lawful social covenant, which in this case is the APEC regime or proto-regime of 'governing arrangements or principles, norms, rules and procedures', is the objective of a *learning process* where one learns to curtail one's true self through one's access to reason. Three things occur within this envisioning.

First, the process of learning is to be understood as never complete since one can not completely disavow one's true nature. For cooperative behaviour to have any meaning, conflict must remain the primary ground and the privileged term of the dichotomy. In this sense, conflict must always remain cooperation's constitutive outside. Thus, despite being in overwhelming favour of cooperation and continuously pointing towards successful international cooperative arrangements 'after hegemony' that are meant to put the lie to realist "hegemonic stability theories",<sup>58</sup> neo-liberal institutionalism never abandons conflict as the foundational imaginary of IR. It can not abandon conflict because that would disenable the very possibility of cooperation. As we saw with the first discursive manoeuvre where economics are geo-politicized, conflict in the Asia-Pacific must always be located somewhere.

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<sup>57</sup> Such an obvious point is not entirely clear, however when one finds in the formal discourse an abundance of statements such as "Anticipations of a long and winding road follow from the appreciation [...] that *regional states* [emphasis added] may just be engaged in a process of *learning* how to cooperate." Richard Higgott, Richard Leaver, and John Ravenhill, 'The Pacific Economic Future: Towards Conventions of Moderation?', in *Pacific Economic Relations in the 1990s*, 316-317.

<sup>58</sup> "Certainly there is no support for the hegemonic stability thesis in the postwar history of the Asia-Pacific region where U.S. hegemony, as we have noted, was not accompanied by the creation of multilateral regimes.", Mack and Ravenhill, 'Economic and Security Regimes in the Asia-Pacific Region', in *Pacific Cooperation*, 8. A similar argument is formulated by Vinod K. Aggarwal, 'Comparing Regional Cooperation Efforts in the Asia-Pacific and North America', in *Pacific Cooperation*, 40-41.

Second, by drawing an implicit equivalence with the imaginary of a Hobbesian state of nature/ society dichotomy, where reason becomes the means through which cooperative social behaviour is achieved and through which a covenant (regime) is produced, there is concomitantly the creation of a correspondence between reason and cooperation. As Inayatullah and Rupert note, to navigate from the state of nature to society in a Hobbesian imaginary, one needs to envision individuals as having “the capacity for trust and cooperation- [an] ability to reason together.”<sup>59</sup> Without this capacity for trust and cooperation, humans would somehow remain in their state of nature and never be capable of producing the social covenant. When viewed through this imaginary therefore, the terrain of cooperation is delimited by the reasoned action which creates it, just as reason in the Hobbesian imaginary is what enables the social covenant to be created. Consequently, by means of a chain of equivalence which equates reason with cooperative behaviour, the regime which is produced by cooperation becomes the end result of reasoned behaviour among state representatives who choose, in this case, to create APEC. The navigation from the anarchical state of nature towards a cooperative social covenant enables neo-liberal institutionalism to claim that the ‘continued institution building of APEC’ is “a cognitive process to do with the nature of actor learning in international relations”.<sup>60</sup> Learning to cooperate becomes reasoned behaviour because reason is what enables states to access cooperative behaviour. This implies that non-cooperative behaviour can only be unreasoned behaviour since it is contrary to learned behaviour. Thus, non-cooperative behaviour on the part of state representatives, such as a resistance towards increased

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<sup>59</sup> Inayatullah and Rupert, ‘Hobbes, Smith, and the Problem of Mixed Ontologies in Neorealist IPE’, 65.

<sup>60</sup> Higgott, ‘APEC- A Sceptical View’, 72.

trade and investment liberalization through the elimination of non-tariff barriers, is linked *a priori* to unreasoned behaviour. What is being (de)politicized by this complex series of equivalences which is drawn in neo-liberal institutionalism's discourse on cooperation among states is precisely how non-cooperation can be seen as abnormal or unreasoned prior to an inquiry into what APEC is attempting to cooperate on. Immediately, the ontological commitment to a form of Hobbesian state of nature/ society dichotomy and the latter's usage of reason, equates interstate cooperation with reasoned behaviour regardless of the substance of cooperation.

Third, signifying cooperation as a 'learning process' enables associating cooperation with betterment, increased knowledge, and progress, i.e., those things which are generally associated with learning within a modern frame. Thus, implicit with the notion of learning is that we are improving ourselves. Only the insane or irrational would deliberately learn to be worse off than they are presently. Associating cooperation with learning, i.e., learning to be other than our true nature, therefore sets a privileged terrain for cooperation by appropriating progress and knowledged behaviour. Anything that would be seen as impeding or constraining cooperation can become the opposite, unreasoned, unknowledged, and unprogressive behaviour. As such, even outside of the specific items on the agenda of regional economic cooperation, such as investment liberalization (that is prior to the practice politics of economic cooperation), the terrain of interstate cooperation which is created and deployed by the neo-liberal institutionalist strand of the formal discourse is *political*. It is political because it assigns a privileged meaning to cooperation as a signifier by occulting the construction of the discursive chain of equivalences through which the meaning is formed. Put simply, within this series of equivalences interstate cooperation can never be 'bad' since

it is *a priori* linked to the learned behaviour necessary to navigate from the conflictual state of nature of realism's anarchical world towards a cooperative covenant/ regime favoured by the neo-liberal institutionalist world. There is clearly a group of states in APEC who are far less close to what is understood as the present 'governing arrangements or principles, norms, rules and procedures for handling issues in international economic relations', and who consequently must eliminate more of those 'impediments' to increased economic integration. In terms of the consequences of this political move at the level of the practice of politics, it is therefore far more likely that the unreasoned, unknowledged, and unprogressive behaviour of non-cooperation will be assigned to a designated group. Or to use the sterile language of the formal discourse, "[i]ncreased interdependence inevitably imposes adjustment costs on some communities; the gains from cooperation will be shared unequally."<sup>61</sup> In fact, this group constitutes the majority of APEC members, and they are tacitly labelled insofar as they are those who must meet the 2020 date for trade and investment liberalization set at Bogor in 1994. Although this group has not yet been formally named in APEC other than with the label 'developing economies', there is nevertheless clear idea of who they are not, i.e., the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and possibly Japan.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Mack and Ravenhill, 'Economic and Security Regimes in the Asia-Pacific Region', 8.

<sup>62</sup> The intentional lack of formal acknowledgement of who are the 'developing economies' has fuelled the practice of politics within APEC that has sought to avoid both the discourse of 'development' as well as the North/ South divide upon which the latter hinges. In other words, any suggestion that APEC should be a conduit for 'technology transfer' for instance, a traditional Third World demand, has been resisted. Within the formal discourse, this aspect of APEC's practice of politics has translated into some outrageous claims about emerging forms of 'new regionalism'. Take for example this claim by the director of the East West Center in Hawaii, "In this author's view, APEC members-economies should view development cooperation broadly as a process for working together to develop the entire region in mutually agreed upon ways and not as a process for transferring resources. From this vantage point, *all* the APEC members have developing economies and can cooperate to achieve common goals in developing the Asia-Pacific region.

Viewing APEC through regime theory and the cooperation/ conflict problématique has the effect of sustaining the (de)politicization of APEC. It does so by envisioning the latter as the outcome of an *a priori* world of states. Consequently, APEC itself is not political. It is merely the byproduct of states seeking to manage technical cooperation and regional trade and investment issues in an era of increased economic globalization. To envision APEC in this manner relies on giving states and the interstate system a status prior to discursivity and obscures the manner in which APEC sustains the appearance of an interstate world as a determined structure. Furthermore, the series of equivalences which are drawn creates a terrain in which cooperation among states is *a priori* reasoned behaviour. Opposition to such cooperation is left to the terrain of irrationalism since interstate cooperation appropriates rational, reasoned behaviour prior to the issues which are to be dealt with.

***Three: instituting the division between politics and the economic***

The third discursive manoeuvre that I wish to explore in this chapter is the one which deploys, perhaps most forcefully, the dichotomy between politics and economics (also embodying the division between the public and the private). This manoeuvre is found in APEC's discourse on open regionalism.<sup>63</sup> Open regionalism is an APEC trope of which we find echos in the 1989

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These include establishing efficient regional transportation networks, creating world-class telecommunications links, developing the human resources needed for economic growth, and protecting the Asia-Pacific environment." Charles E. Morrison, 'Development Cooperation in the 21st Century: Implications for APEC', *Asian Perspective*, 21, no. 2 (1997), 52.

<sup>63</sup> Some in the formal discourse have used the term 'open economic association' (OEA). See for instance Ippei Yamazawa, 'Economic Integration in the Asia-Pacific Region', in *Economic Dynamism in the Asia-Pacific*, 179.

inaugural ministerial statement in Canberra and which was formally used in the ministerial statement in 1991.<sup>64</sup> Among the APEC tropes, open regionalism is perhaps the most theorized within the formal discourse and consequently the subject of most debate.<sup>65</sup> This debate is seen to reflect the two opposing positions within APEC, one seemingly of ‘Western’ heritage which was made prevalent in 1993 when the American government chaired the first meeting of APEC heads of state; and the other meant to be the original and distinctly ‘Pacific’ version of open regionalism.<sup>66</sup> In contrast to what is seen as leading to “old-fashioned preferential trading arrangement[s] or regional trading bloc[s]”<sup>67</sup> as found in Europe and North America, the ‘Pacific’ view of open regionalism contends that voluntary and unilateral regional economic liberalization without the need for specific reciprocity is in the best interest of East Asian and Western Pacific states. It is this causal link

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<sup>64</sup> The joint statement of the first ministerial meeting states: “Every economy represented in Canberra relies heavily on a strong and open multilateral trading system, and none believes that Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation should be directed to the formation of a trading bloc.” APEC, ‘First Ministerial Meeting Joint Statement: Canberra, Australia, November 6-7, 1989’. APEC, ‘Third Ministerial Meeting Joint Statement: Seoul Korea, November 12-14, 1991’.

<sup>65</sup> See for instance Ross Garnaut, *Open Regionalism and Trade Liberalization: An Asia-Pacific Contribution to the World Trade System* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1996), Ross Garnaut and Peter Drysdale, ‘Asia Pacific Regionalism: The Issues’, in *Asia-Pacific Regionalism*, 5-7. Most of Garnaut and Drysdale’s work on the Asia-Pacific economy revolves around advocating and defending open regionalism.

<sup>66</sup> In an attempt to trace the ‘Pacific’ heritage of open regionalism and fix its meaning to the view espoused by this side of the debate, Takashi Terada has outlined a historiography of the term in which he traces a ‘Japanese’ heritage to this discursive practice which outdates APEC’s usage as well as that of other regional organizations such as PECC. According to the author open regionalism was first used by the Japanese delegates at the 1955 Ministerial Meetings for the Colombo Plan. Takashi Terada, ‘The Origins of Japan’s APEC Policy: Foreign Minister Takeo Miki’s Asia Pacific Policy and Current Implications’, *The Pacific Review*, 11, no. 3 (1998), 337-363. In his final footnote, Terada notes that the second view of open regionalism, i.e., the ‘Western’ one, as it was outlined in the second EPG report in 1994 chaired by Bergsten only succeeded in creating “confusion and criticism”. This second view is reflected in the 1994 EPG report to APEC, *Implementing the APEC Vision: Free and Open Trade in the Asia Pacific*. On the second view as articulated in the formal discourse see C. Fred Bergsten, ‘Open Regionalism’, in *Whither APEC?*, 83-105.

<sup>67</sup> Andrew Elek, ‘From Osaka to Subic: APEC’s Challenges for 1996’, *Pacific Economic Paper No. 255* (Canberra: Australia-Japan Research Centre, and the Australian National University, 1996), 4.

between the internationally oriented growth of ‘East Asian economic dynamism’ and the international liberal trade regime that has led the formal discourse to conclude that “voluntary and unilateral” trade and investment liberalization is “taken on the basis of their [East Asian governments] perceptions of their own self-interest.”<sup>68</sup> The principles of international economic liberalism are seen as responsible for “the highly beneficial effect of one country’s liberalization on its own trade expansion [leading] each Western Pacific economy to calculate that, whatever policies others follow, it will benefit more from keeping its own borders open to trade than from protection.”<sup>69</sup> As such, what underlies open regionalism is the belief that the liberal international trade regime, or at least the international free trade principles and economic liberalism it is meant to embody are capable of producing ‘common self interest’ among Asia-Pacific states moving them in unison towards trade and investment liberalization. In this logic, the world of economics is created as a higher order of human being where one need not think in terms of the immutable ‘tit-for-tat’ of geo-politics as was the case within the geo-politicization of economics found in the first discourse of danger explored earlier. That divided world of geo-political conflict is superseded by the common unified world of economics and the common self-interest it produces. It is this common self-interest in the principles of free trade and economic liberalism that enables the immemorial ‘prisoner’s dilemma’ of international relations to be transformed into the bliss of ‘prisoner’s delight’ which I briefly mentioned at the start of the previous section. The inherent ‘tit-for-tat’ game of the ‘prisoner’s dilemma’ is replaced by a “prisoner’s delight game consist[ing] of a series of movements

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>69</sup> Peter Drysdale and Ross Garnaut, ‘Principles of Pacific Economic Integration’, in *Asia Pacific Regionalism*, 51.

toward sets of trade policies that are more favorable for all countries.”<sup>70</sup> In contradistinction to the institutionally driven discriminatory regionalism of NAFTA and the EU, the market driven integration of open regionalism of the Asia-Pacific does not need to discriminate against outsiders, even so-called free riders.<sup>71</sup> Within this context, open regionalism is meant to embody a form of non-discriminatory regionalism where any economic liberalization is not limited solely to countries of the Asia-Pacific, thereby reconciling the tension between economic regionalism and its global counterpart, multilateralism. Liberalization is no longer seen as a cost or a concession but is envisioned as a benefit since “[a]ny perceived disadvantages in changes in income distribution associated with trade liberalisation are judged by the political process to be less important than the gains for the nation as a whole.”<sup>72</sup> To be sure, there are areas such agriculture which remain highly sensitive to liberalization, but here “peer pressure”<sup>73</sup> similar to the OECD’s ‘peer review’ process is more conducive with the model of open regionalism than aggressive ‘tit-for-tat’ reciprocity. Indeed, within this context of voluntary and unilateral liberalization, any form of ‘rent-seeking’ or reciprocity would be seen as counteracting what is understood to be the Asia-Pacific model of regionalism and the ‘economic dynamism’ it produces: the prisoner’s delight. From here, the policy direction of open regionalism entails a “recognition of the power of market forces in promoting high intensity in intra-regional trade; and acceptance in principle that there is a role for governments in

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<sup>70</sup> Drysdale and Garnaut, ‘The Pacific: An Application of a General Theory of Economic Integration’ 188.

<sup>71</sup> Vinod K. Aggarwal, ‘Comparing Regional Cooperation Efforts in the Asia-Pacific and North America’, in *Pacific Cooperation*, 49.

<sup>72</sup> Drysdale and Garnaut, ‘Principles of Pacific Economic Integration’, 48.

<sup>73</sup> Elek, ‘From Osaka to Subic’, 3.

provision of public goods to promote regional trade expansion.”<sup>74</sup> The discursive practice of open regionalism thus combines, and seeks to theoretically legitimate two dogmas of neo-liberalism deployed by the ‘Washington consensus’: that market forces are the most efficient means of allocating resources and generating wealth; and that consequently

[a]t best, governments can assist market integration through improvement of public goods that support the internal market, and through unilateral and multilateral reductions in official barriers [...] conditions [which] have been present in the Western Pacific, and their presence in more countries and relationships has encouraged others to join the process.<sup>75</sup>

In many respects, the discursive practice of open regionalism embodies the most significant work of (de)politicization both within the formal and practical discourse of APEC. Furthermore, it encapsulates very well the foundational narrative with which APEC is envisioned. It seeks to locate the difference that distinguishes this regional interstate economic regime from others while appropriating elements of the discursive economy of neo-liberalism. In this sense, open regionalism invokes a difference meant to be specific to the Asia-Pacific while at the same time collapsing this difference into the same.

How the (de)politicization occurs with the discursive practice of open regionalism follows from how the formal discourse has generally viewed the opposing discursive practice, that is so-called ‘discriminatory regionalism’. The movement towards economic regionalism during the past few decades has most often been seen as a ‘fall from grace’, a subversion of multilateral economic liberalism as it was instituted after the second World War. This has led to the late 1980s

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<sup>74</sup> Ross Garnaut and Peter Drysdale, ‘Asia Pacific Regionalism: The Issues’ in , *Asia Pacific Regionalism*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Garnaut and Drysdale, ‘The Pacific: An Application of a General Theory of Economic Integration’, 220 (emphasis added).

debate within international economic liberalism between what is most often put forth as the ill grounded economic gains of regionalism for the few at the expense of multilateralism for all. Those who sided with multilateralism viewed regionalism in derogatory and contemptuous terms since it was associated with preferential trade agreements (PTAs) which are seen to have trade diverting effects leading to a reduction in “world welfare”.<sup>76</sup> The regionalism of the EU and NAFTA were not seen as promoting a rules based open trading regime in tune with the principles of economic liberalism and the primacy of world market forces. Rather, they were associated with ‘vested interests’ and politically motivated attempts to discriminate against the competitiveness of outsiders rather than assuming the task of economic adjustment induced by the new international economic structure which was displacing some of the traditional industrial base in the developed countries. In short, regionalism seldom followed market forces, or if it did, did so at the expense of the principles of the open multilateral trade embodied in the GATT by discriminating against foreigners. Thus, there was an implicit equivalence being made between regionalism and irrational behaviour since it did not allow market forces to freely function. Since regionalism was the product of politics and not economics, a further implicit equivalence was being drawn between politics and irrationalism.

In contradistinction, the discursive practice of open regionalism not only draws an equivalence with the principles of open non-discriminatory free trade for all espoused by

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<sup>76</sup> See for instance Jadish Bhagwati, ‘Regionalism versus Multilateralism’, *The World Economy*, 15, no. 5 (1992), 542. Bhagwati, who at the time of writing the above article was the Economic Policy Adviser to the Director-General of the GATT, was one of the more ardent opponents of regionalism, more specifically what he termed “the second regionalism”, i.e., the movement towards PTAs initiated at the beginning of the 1980s. In regards to this view as it applies to the Asia-Pacific see Garnaut and Drysdale, ‘East Asia in the International System’.

multilateral organizations such as the GATT, it also seeks to appropriate the global dimension and goals of economic multilateralism.<sup>77</sup> This is seen by some as a policy direction which allows regional organizations such as APEC to be “nested” in the GATT and the principles of free and open trade it is meant to embody.<sup>78</sup> As we saw earlier, in its attempt to oppose itself to the institutional economic integration of PTAs, the policy option of market driven integration of open regionalism subverts the negative politics of regionalism by claiming to be merely “descriptive of the reality of the Asia-Pacific trade expansion” because it follows market forces.<sup>79</sup> In this sense, open regionalism is meant to be the ‘real’ economic form of regionalism and not its distorted political form since it is regionalism induced by the market. It is understood to be a reflection of *de facto* regionalisation, i.e., the result of “private sector market power”, rather than the *de jure* regionalisation, i.e., “public sector political authority” found elsewhere.<sup>80</sup> In short, there is an overwhelming belief that the region’s economic dynamism, and the regional integration it induced, was engendered by answering to the demands of international market forces. Regionalism, as ‘open regionalism’, is no longer the product of politics, but rather becomes merely a reflection of the higher order of economics and its

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<sup>77</sup> Bergsten for instance has argued that: “Contrary to most expectations about regional economic organizations, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum is poised to become a driving force for *worldwide trade liberalization*.” C. Fred Bergsten, ‘APEC and World Trade: A Force for Worldwide Liberalization’, *Foreign Affairs*, 73, no. 3 (1994), 20.

<sup>78</sup> See in particular Maxwell A. Cameron, ‘Nesting NAFTA in APEC: The Political Economy of Open Subregionalism’, in *Asia-Pacific Crossroads*, 257-258.

<sup>79</sup> Garnaut quoted in Terada, ‘The Origins of Japan’s APEC Policy’, 356.

<sup>80</sup> The distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* regional integration is made by Higgott. Although Higgott does contend that *de jure* institutional economic cooperation “is at the core of any serious understanding of the events in train in the Asia-Pacific” he concludes that “it is private sector market power, not state sponsored institutional direction that is the determinant factor” for this region of the world. See Higgott, ‘The Pacific and Beyond’, 339 and 350.

generative forces, i.e., the private sector. Any form of politics which remains within the discursive practice of open regionalism is merely a functional extension of economic forces. Indeed, the policy orientation of open regionalism assigns a very functionalist role to the state, where the latter is to be seen as merely a provider of public goods assuming the public cost of constructing and maintaining the regional and international infrastructure for market-led integration. This functionalist envisioning of the role of the state is reflected in the practice of politics which APEC promotes, and mirrors the view of politics found in the Washington Consensus which assigns a subservient role to politics in relation to economics. From the standpoint of this envisioning of the role of the state, and by extension the role of politics, it becomes simple to (de)politicize the imaginary that APEC uses to designate its members as 'member economies' headed by 'economic leaders'. In other words, from the discursive practice of open regionalism where regional integration is led by (private) markets and not by (public) governments, it only makes sense to extirpate politically charged words such as country, state, or nation, from the discourse. The discursive practice of open regionalism provides the terrain from which 'member economies' and 'economic leaders' no longer seems nonsensical to the world of international relations. Rather, it merely is a reflection of the true role governments must assume as 'member economies' following the policy direction of open regionalism. Nor is the privileged status accorded to the subject position of business seem unusual if what is driving regional integration is private-led market forces. Within the discourse of open regionalism, the division between the economic and the political is instituted in a manner such that even the practice of politics is no longer political. Rather, it becomes a functional extension of (private) economic forces needing publically funded solutions for the

provision of regional infrastructure in areas of trade, investment, and information exchange. Consequently, what is perceived as the negative international politics of traditional forms of regionalism, i.e., PTAs, is subverted.

However, as I argued above, the higher order of human being from which open regionalism as a practice between states becomes possible and from which their status as 'member economies' is enabled is threatened and potentially contaminated by the same negative politics of regionalism it is meant to supercede. This is because regionalism as a protectionist movement informs the second discourse of danger seen in section one from which the formal discourse creates the threat to the economic well being of the Asia-Pacific and its policy direction of open regionalism. This is where the division between the economic and the political upon which open regionalism is predicated finds the limit of its (de)politicization. To have any meaning, open regionalism as a discursive practice informing interstate economic cooperation must create itself in opposition to traditional regionalism. It is its constitutive outside from which its difference is created and from which its meaning is formed. Herein lies the political move of open regionalism. In its attempt to be nothing but *l'annoncé du réel*, a mere functional extension of the *de facto* regional economic reality induced by market forces, the discursive practice of open regionalism must delimit a terrain of meaning. In so doing it must deploy a geo-economic discourse of danger by which the principles of the open multilateral economic system it attempts to appropriate are threatened by discriminatory regionalism or PTAs. In delimiting this terrain the discursive practice of open regionalism reveals its political operation. In seeking to make the practice of politics among states in the Asia-Pacific merely a function of market forces through the discursive practice of open

regionalism, neo-liberal institutionalism and international economic neo-liberalism must forcefully draw a frontier between the economic (private) and the political (public), something which is in itself *political*. This move contributes to the (de)politicization which is found in APEC's particular discourse, 'member economies', and 'economic leaders', by providing a theoretical ground from which these terms no longer seem nonsensical to the world of international relations.

***Four: 'miracle', 'dynamism', 'tigers', 'dragons', 'flying geese', and the 'contagious Asian flu'***

The final discursive manoeuvre I wish to explore is found in the series of signifiers often used in formulating the imaginary of the 'Asia-Pacific'. Since the beginning of the economic restructuring after the Second World War, this series of signifiers has been assigned to the economic development of individual East-Asian countries as well as to the region as a whole. When one speaks of 'miracle', 'dynamism', 'tigers', 'dragons', or 'flying geese' there is little doubt that the subject will be either the economic performance of individual East-Asian countries or the Asia-Pacific itself as it enters what has often been designated as the 'Pacific Century'. To the extent that they populate the imagined Asia-Pacific, particularly when it comes to signifying the world of economics, these terms have strongly informed the (pre)text from which the formal and practical discourse of APEC reads. My intent is to show that, while they invoke a 'difference' meant to be an 'Asian difference', in the end they work at collapsing difference into the 'same'. One could suggest that these signifiers are merely colourful characterizations found only in titles, jackets, and introductions and are of little import for any serious understanding of the Asia-Pacific and APEC. However, if one is willing to accept that the Asia-Pacific is 'imagined' as was suggested at the onset

of this chapter, then there is a need to examine what populates this imagination and how the latter serves in (re)creating and sustaining specific ways of viewing the world rather than others. My contention is that these signifiers are important because they participate in informing and delimiting the terrain of discourse, both formal and practical, on APEC and the Asia-Pacific. More specifically, they are the terms which are used to imagine this part of the world as 'other' while at the same time folding this difference into sameness. In this sense, my interest in these terms is only related to their mythological and anthropological origins insofar as these origins enable a 'difference'. Although implied as part of the signifier, the anthropological and mythical history these origins are supposed to invoke, is very rarely addressed. What I want to suggest is that these signifiers carry another level of meaning when they are used within the formal and practical discourse addressed in this chapter. And it is this second level of meaning which participates in informing and delimiting the (pre)text of APEC.

Among these signifiers, miracle is one of the most prominent. One can easily find it in the formal discourse as early as the 1960s when miracle was being used to characterize the industrialization and general economic growth and recovery of Japan subsequent to its defeat in the Second World War. What was seen as the unprecedented speed of recovery and industrialization began to be labelled 'miraculous' since it was even outpacing the economic recovery of other areas devastated by the war, in particular capitalism's hinterland Europe. During the 1970s the term was being extended to other countries, first to the 'little dragons' or 'four tigers' (Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan) then during the 1980s to the 'tiger cubs' or 'new little dragons' (Indonesia,

Thailand, Malaysia,<sup>81</sup> and on occasion the Philippines). It was at this time that the origins of the term can be seen as gaining significance since it was at this moment that observers began to attribute the success of the ‘dragons’, ‘tigers’, and ‘tiger cubs’ to the idea that the unprecedented speed of growth stemmed, at least in part, from the imitation of some form of ‘Japanese economic model’. Finally, in the first half of the 1990s, the World Bank used the signifier to characterize the region as a whole in its famous policy research report *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* in which the status of miracle was assigned to eight “East Asian economies”.<sup>82</sup> The Bank’s report on the “East Asian economic miracle” was among its most published reports and it has contributed

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<sup>81</sup> Steven Schlosstein, *Asia’s New Little Dragons: The Dynamic Emergence of Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1991).

<sup>82</sup> Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Taiwan. In the first footnote to the report, the World Bank adds to these eight China, but with some obvious trepidation since China is not included in the substantial part of the study. The report states: “Recently China, particularly southern China, has recorded high growth rates using policies that in some ways resemble those of the HPAEs [high performing Asian economies]. This very significant development is beyond the scope of our study, mainly because China’s ownership structure, methods of corporate and civil governance, and reliance on markets are so different from those of the HPAEs, and is such rapid flux, that cross-economy comparison is *problematic*.” See the World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle Economic Growth and Public Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), footnote p. 1 (emphasis added). This rather arduous justification for having avoided China is indeed ‘problematic’ for a number of reasons. First, where the World Bank was able to find commonality among the eight countries chosen (despite the admission in the president’s forward to the report that the “diversity of experience re-inforces the view that economic policies and policy advice must be country-specific, if they are to be effective”) it was obviously unable to stretch that ‘diversity’ to include China. Second, the diversity to which the Bank refers are elements of a political difference not an economic difference. Indeed, the Bank admits that the economic policies used by China “in some ways resemble those of the [eight] HPAEs” they have chosen to study. As such, the criteria for excluding China are obviously not the same economic criteria which have been used to include those eight which form the substance of the report. And third, China achieved what is most valued by the World Bank, high economic growth rates measured as gross national product (GNP) per capita, from what is seen as a political standpoint antithetical to the one favoured by the Bank. This is particularly relevant in light of the background to the report which has been well described by Robert Wade. As Wade highlights, the report, financed by the Japanese government, is to be understood as part of an attempt to make the bank recognize state intervention in the market as a means to economic development was a valid policy alternative to the ‘laissez-faire’ liberalism which has been strongly promoted by the Bank since the early 1980s. That China also achieved its growth through what arguably can be seen as state lead growth would seem to suggest that it should have been included in the substance of the report. As Wade suggests, the fact that it was not indicates the role the Bank plays in the maintenance of what is and what is not acceptable neoliberalism. See Robert Wade, ‘Japan the World Bank, and the Art of Paradigm Maintenance: *The East Asian Miracle* in Political Perspective’, *New Left Review*, 217 (1996), 3-36.

significantly to labelling ‘miracle economy’ as a distinctly ‘East-Asian’ signifier. What is interesting is how the term is used in the structuring of the formal discourse on the Asia-Pacific of which the report itself is a component and indicative of the manner miracle is used elsewhere.<sup>83</sup>

From the onset of the report, within the first few pages, both in the forward written by the president of the Bank and in the first section ‘Overview: The Making of a Miracle’ we are introduced to the place the signifier occupies in the structuring of the discourse. It is here that we are told the truth about the ‘miracle economies’, that the ‘East-Asian economies’ are of course not ‘miracles’ the product of divine intervention, as the meaning is suppose to suggests. Rather, they are the product of the ‘right economic fundamentals’ which the Bank’s analysis seeks to unveil. It is plainly clear that no one at the Bank, or elsewhere in the formal discourse on the Asia-Pacific for that matter, believes in ‘miracles’. The usage of the term is meant as a rhetorical device, one which seeks to couch itself in the language of the popular understanding of ‘East-Asian’ economic growth. However, the signifier does have a function beyond its *facile* rhetorical role, one which enables the terrain from which the formal discourse can convey itself as being that of *l’émence grise*. This becomes clear in the president’s forward where he sets the terrain of the questioning by asking “What does this report tell us about the East Asian miracle?”. A little later it tells us of course that “there is nothing ‘miraculous’ about the East Asian economies”.<sup>84</sup> The same suspicious tone is found in the report itself where East-Asian economic growth is only “seemingly miraculous”.<sup>85</sup> In the

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<sup>83</sup> For instance see Paul Krugman, ‘The Myth of Asia’s Miracle’, *Foreign Affairs*, 73, no. 6 (1994), 62-78.

<sup>84</sup> World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle*, v and vi.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

structuring of the discourse, the signifier is used as a false premise that is to be unveiled by careful analysis couched in terms of scientific inquiry. The term miracle within the report enables the creation of a terrain in which the mysticism/ truth, divine/ rational dichotomies anchors the report to truth and rationality in a classic modern form by counterposing itself to what is meant to be a premodern term anchored in mysticism. Miracle is used with somewhat obvious satirical intent to convince us that what is unveiled by the Bank's analysis is the 'truth' about the source of 'East Asian economic growth'. It is an analysis of the 'reality' of economic growth that will debunk this popular misnomer.

It is within this context however, that the report comes much closer to the literal sense of miracle than is foreseen and that the signifier has a function outside of its religious tone. Like a miracle, the report invokes the notion of an absolute outside of contingency. In seeking to ground its analysis in the observation of what is 'real', the report claims, as it states in the Overview, to unveil "the essence of the miracle", i.e., what it sees as being the underlying economic fundamentals of "rapid growth with equity".<sup>86</sup> The essence of the miracle is to be found in that 'economic reality-out-there' unveiled from the *position de survol* occupied by the Bank's analysts. Here, the absolute is situated at an epistemological level. The dichotomy from which the discourse is structured seeks to separate the report from the reality it purports to describe in an absolute manner. The term invokes a *position de survol* from which it can survey the 'essence' of what is the truth behind the miracle. What is taken from the signifier is not its religious meaning but its theologico-political structure. By counterposing its analysis to the term miracle, the unveiling that is to be

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 8.

effected by the report is founded on an absolute division between itself and that which it seeks to describe, and this is done in view of appropriating an unconditional terrain, that of the 'truth' behind rapid economic growth. Where the discursive manoeuvre of miracle hides its positivist assumptions is in the facile rhetorical role it is meant to play.

In terms of the (pre)text for APEC's discourse, miracle informs the view that what is being dealt with is an economic reality outside, or prior, to the political. It contributes to sustaining the division between politics and economics by placing the latter in the realm of the 'world-out-there' capable of being objectively analysed. As a rhetorical device, the function of miracle is to sustain idea that economics is the constative from which the reality of the Asia-Pacific is formed while occulting its participation in the performative creation of this world. By reinforcing the imaginary lines between politics and economics the meaning which accompanies the signifier contributes to maintaining (international) economic issues outside of the realm of the democratic imaginary.

Dynamism is the other principal signifier that is used in informing and delimiting the terrain from which APEC and the Asia-Pacific are most often read by the formal and practical discourse.<sup>87</sup> Since the late 1980s, it has even been used formally by the OECD in its designation of non-members with which the organization has sought to establish a policy dialogue.<sup>88</sup> The signifier

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<sup>87</sup> As examples, see *Economic Dynamism in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Thompson, *Pacific Dynamism and the International Economic System*, eds. Bergsten and Noland, Steve Chan, *East Asian Dynamism: Growth, Order, and Security in the Pacific Region* (Boulder Co.: Westview Press, 1993), Staffan Burenstam Linder, *The Pacific Century: Economic and Political Consequences of Asian-Pacific Dynamism* (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986).

<sup>88</sup> More specifically, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand are designated within the OECD as the 'most dynamic economies outside Europe'.

has also been used extensively in APEC's ministerial joint statements and leaders' annual declarations and constitutes part of the foundational narrative of the organization's *raison d'être*. Dynamism marks the changing of the Asia-Pacific from its uncertain future during the Cold War, towards its dynamic integration into the world economy of the post-Cold War era. As U.S. president Bill Clinton proclaimed during a speech at the inaugural APEC leaders meeting in Seattle in 1993, East-Asian "economies have gone from being dominoes to dynamos"<sup>89</sup> counterposing to 'dynamos' the analogy used by Eisenhower's infamous 'domino theory' which dominated U.S. foreign policy for Asia and the rest of the world during the Cold War. In informing the (pre)text, dynamism invokes a changing international economic and political environment which, among other things, creates the need for new interstate organizations such as APEC.<sup>90</sup> Dynamism signifies the generating force behind the "large geopolitical shift"<sup>91</sup> or "Megatrend"<sup>92</sup> animating the change towards the 'Pacific Century'.

There are generally two meanings which can accompany the signifier dynamism. The first, is the notion of force. Because of their economic dynamism individual East-Asian countries are seen as an emerging force internationally, primarily in economic terms but with some important consequences for the traditional politics international relations. Being signified as an emerging force

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<sup>89</sup> 'The APEC Role in Creating Jobs, Opportunities, and Security', Address by president Clinton to the Seattle APEC Host Committee Seattle (Washington November 19, 1993).

<sup>90</sup> "It will also be argued that the development of these processes [APEC and ASEM] are the inevitable outcome of the growing global significance of Asia-Pacific dynamism". Higgott, 'The Pacific and Beyond', 336.

<sup>91</sup> See for instance Peter A. Gourevitch, 'The Pacific Rim: Current Debates', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 505 (September, 1989), 8-23.

<sup>92</sup> John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, *Megatrends 2000: Ten New Directions for the 1990s* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990), 178.

generally leads to placing ‘dynamic’ East-Asian countries in one of two possible categories. Either they are viewed as a force to be admired or a force to be feared.<sup>93</sup> The dynamism of rapid economic growth is to be admired if one is looking for lessons from the economic success story that could be applied or exported elsewhere, thereby exhorting others to follow the path. It is to be feared since ‘dynamic’ forces change older configurations of international economic and political forces towards new ones, the ‘Pacific Century’, ‘disrupting’ the “calm flow of history” and leading to disorder, instability, and conflict.<sup>94</sup> In informing the context of East-Asian economic growth, dynamism occupies a crucial part in creating the terrain for the cooperation/ conflict problématique from which is imagined this part of the world as we saw earlier in section two.

The second meaning which can accompany dynamism is the naturalism of the economic force found in the ‘dragons’, ‘tigers’, and ‘flying geese’. At the beginning the signifier counterposes itself to mechanistic force which invokes the idea of something which has been ‘man made’. Similar to miracle, the inherent dynamism is used as a false assumption about the true source of what is seen as rapid economic growth which is to be unveiled by careful analysis. Here, the dynamism is not inherent but rather is the product of a host of factors (good state intervention, cultural values, geo-political circumstance of the Cold War period, or changes in the world economic system) the sequence and importance of which are generally the subject of the analysis. The intent is to show how ‘dynamic’ economic growth is in fact much more like its counterposition, i.e., mechanistic or ‘man made’. In this case, the rhetorical function of dynamism is similar to that

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<sup>93</sup> The admire/ fear dichotomy as part of the West’s imagining of the ‘Orient’ has deep historical roots. See J.J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought* (London: Routledge, 1997), 3-14.

<sup>94</sup> Gilpin, ‘International Politics in the Pacific Rim Era’, 56-67.

of miracle to the extent that it enables the appropriation of the terrain of ‘truth’ by placing the term from the onset as a false premise in need of demystification. However, contrary to miracle, dynamism also informs those readings which, in a sense, draw an equivalence with its literal meaning. For here, there is an attempt to essentialize, and in this sense naturalize, the origins of economic growth in East-Asia. Dynamism and the inherentness it invokes is taken as ‘real’. This may involve anchoring dynamism to some form of inherent and distinct ‘East-Asian’ culture embedded in deep confucius roots<sup>95</sup> or its more recent racial, cultural, and moral counterpart ‘East Asian values’.<sup>96</sup> Whereas it would be impossible to draw an equivalence with the literal meaning of miracle within a modern frame, the unconditional meaning that is invoked with dynamism can be taken literally by the positivist assumptions which informs the Asia-Pacific imaginary. The naturalism that accompanies the signification of dynamism, even within the formal discourse, is often deployed to capture some essentialized foundation of ‘East-Asian’ economic growth which is placed outside of political, social, and economic contingency. To be sure, this is most often the product of Western orientalist stereotypes about ‘Asians’, ‘Asian culture’, or ‘Asian religion’. But it does not fall solely within the purview of the Western gaze and its need to create the region as ‘other’. It has also, for instance, informed the discourse which has been used to justify the creation of what is to be seen as a distinctly ‘Asian’ economic bloc, the East-Asian Economic Caucus

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<sup>95</sup> See *In Search of an East Asian Development Model*, eds. Peter L. Berger and Hsin Huang Michael Hsiao (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1988), and *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons*, ed. Tu Wei-Ming (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>96</sup> See for instance, Fareed Zakaria, ‘Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew’ *Foreign Affairs*, 73, no. 2 (1994), 109-126. An evaluation of these discourses are provided by Robison, ‘The Politics of ‘Asian Values’, 309-327, and Rodan, ‘The Internationalization of Ideological Conflict’, 328-351.

(EAEC) launched by Malaysia's Mahatir in 1991. The discourse surrounding the possibility of creating a distinctly Asian economic regionalism finds its foundation by seeking to anchor 'East Asian dynamism' in an inherent 'Asian' cultural form with a moral vision which often uses the West as its designated 'other'. There is a form of occidentalism at work in the Asia-Pacific which resuscitates old imaginaries about 'Asian culture' in order to create the foundation for a practice of politics in the present by which the terrain of what is 'Asian' and what is not is delimited. This is most notably the case of the practice of politics in Malaysia and Singapore but it has found echoes elsewhere in the region,<sup>97</sup> and has been used most clearly at the level of the regional practice of politics in the creation of the EAEC.

The series of signifiers anchored in animality are the ones which convey to the states of East Asia an image of homogenous, and potentially dangerous, corporal entities. Apart from their attempted link to an Asian mythology 'dragons', 'tigers', and 'flying geese' serve to create a difference, an 'Asian other', meant to be different from a designated 'us', or in the case of occidentalism highlighted above, an 'Asian regional identity' different from a designated 'them'. Deploying the image of animality, in contradistinction to humanity, enables more easily this otherness to occur while concurrently facilitating the slip into a discourse of danger. 'Flying geese' aside, 'dragons' and 'tigers' are signified as predators (to be equated with economic predators within the (pre)text for APEC) which in the last instance are to be feared by humans despite their admirable

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<sup>97</sup> For example, the discourse surrounding 'Asian values' has found echoes in the Philippines. The conversion of the Subic Bay military complex housing the U.S. military until it was ousted in 1992 by the Philippine government into an industrial complex and export zone has adopted a "12-point pledge of professionalism" to administer to zone which is inspired by the Singaporean social policies put forth by Lee Kuan Yew one of the most vocal proponents of 'Asian values'. Seth Mydans, 'Subic Bay, Minus U.S., Becomes Surprise Success', *New York Times* (Saturday, November 23, 1996), 3.

beauty. While these signifiers follow in the same vein as dynamism to the extent that they invoke the possibility of a form of natural endowment beyond contingency, they do so by placing the possibility of danger and conflict more openly as a component of the work of signification. By deploying these signifiers, the meaning which is being invoked is that of the predator as a dangerous economic competitor even though the use of the paternal prefix ‘mini’ or ‘little’, as in the ‘little tigers’ or the ‘mini dragons’, contributes to delaying the threat until full maturation, a delay which is crucial for the futurologists claiming a potential threat in the imminent arrival of the ‘Pacific Century’.<sup>98</sup> While ‘flying geese’ do not invoke danger or threat, it does convey to the imagined Asia-Pacific a picture of a unified identity through economic unity and complementarity, while leaving intact the image of self enclosed states and economies.<sup>99</sup> In this sense, it deploys the equivalence between the image of homogeneous corporal entities and the discursive economy of an interstate geo-political and geo-economic world. Indeed, like the names of baseball teams, ‘tigers’, ‘dragons’, and ‘flying geese’ aid in constructing images of aggressive economic competitors playing to win on the ‘win or lose’ field of international economic relations while also enabling the deployment of images of unity, lack of division, and natural endowment.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> On such a view, see in particular, James Fallows, ‘Containing Japan’, *The Atlantic Monthly* (May, 1989), 40-54.

<sup>99</sup> On a useful critique of the state centric and linear path of industrial transformation that is implied with the ‘flying geese’ pattern of economic development see Mitchell Bernard and John Ravenhill, ‘Beyond Product Cycles and Flying Geese: Regionalization, Hierarchy, and the Industrialization of East Asia’, *World Politics*, 47, no. 2 (1995), 171-209.

<sup>100</sup> One can draw a parallel with the manner in which, according to Campbell, ‘Jap’ was used in the United States during World War II to convey the derogatory image of a united nation with an undifferentiated people. As Campbell notes, contrary to the pluralized term ‘Nazis’ which meant that there could be ‘good Germans’, the singular ‘Jap’ tended to disenable a view of a differentiated society. See Campbell, *Writing Security*, 232.

The primary role 'dragons' and 'tigers' play is to reinforce the imaginary backdrop from which international relations can be read as hinging on the fundamental and immutable principle of conflict subsequently enabling the possibility of cooperation among states. On a broader scale, these signifiers also enable a view of self enclosed entities competing in the 'zero sum game' which informs the geo-politicization of economic issues: the economic gains of the 'Pacific Century' are the losses of a declining 'Atlantic Century'. 'Dragons', 'tigers', and 'flying geese' aid in signifying the region as a united whole, populated by strong, up and coming international economic predators and competitors, which contributes to informing both those who read the region as conflict ridden as well as those who read the region as ripe for cooperation. Within this context, they lead to a (de)politicization insofar as they (re)deploy the 'immutable truths' of international relations and interstate cooperation by invoking analogies which reinforce those 'truths'. Thus, signifying them as other or as foreign 'dragons', 'tigers', and 'flying geese' in the end also entails signifying them as the same, as territorially defined state as actors competing for self interest in a hostile anarchical environment. This is what is being (de)politicized: the manner in which these signifiers sustain a conflictual geo-political and geo-economical interstate world while concomitantly creating the basis for a system of difference, an 'Asianess', by which this dangerous world can be defined. The lack of difference would disenable a reading of Asia-Pacific regionalism through the cooperation/ conflict problématique by disallowing the otherness which is needed to create the terrain for the primary term of the dichotomy 'conflict'. Conflict can not occur unless its terrain is occupied by an 'other', and these signifiers contribute to envisioning this otherness.

Since the onset of the economic crisis towards the first half of 1997, the dynamism

of the ‘dragons’, ‘tigers’, and ‘flying geese’ has given way to a new series of signifiers. Among the more notable of these are, the ‘Asian flu’ and the ‘Asian contagion’. In a dramatic reversal of the metamorphoses captured by Clinton’s ‘dominos to dynamos’ analogy used five years prior at APEC’s Seattle meeting, by mid-1997, East Asia was once again subjected to the ‘domino theory’. This time however, they were seen as falling pray not to communism but to crony capitalism and their own financial structural weaknesses. As one of the OECD’s assessment of the Asian contagion put it, “a domino effect set in and the crisis spread.”<sup>101</sup> Although these signifiers are far less present in the formal discourse than the others above (which is partly due to the recentness of the event they are meant to signify), they have nevertheless been part of the popular assessment of the crisis and are now gaining some currency even within the formal discourse.<sup>102</sup>

With the floating of the Thai baht on July 2, 1997<sup>103</sup> symbolically marking the

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<sup>101</sup> Quoted in APEC Economic Committee, *1998 APEC Economic Outlook: Economic Trends and Prospects in the APEC Region* (Singapore: APEC Secretariat, November 1998), 43.

<sup>102</sup> The use of these terms were the subject of a symposium organized by APEC’s economic committee. They were assessed as part of “non-linear forms of behaviour” as reflected by “chaos theories” or “complexity theories”. As such, they were seen as not drawn from traditional economic language nor were they seen as part of the “rational behaviour” that economic theory assigns to economic actors. See APEC Economic Committee, *1998 APEC Economic Outlook Symposium: Papers and Proceedings* (APEC Secretariat, Singapore, November 1998). In particular see Dan Curiak, ‘The Asian Crisis: The Challenge to Conventional Wisdom’, 145-170. Curiak shows that all the elements which are generally singled out as the cause of the crisis, e.g., weak financial infrastructure, poor transparency of financial information, crony capitalism, were well known prior to the crisis and did not appear to be any cause for concern among major international economic institutions in their economic forecasting. In fact, as late as May 1997, the IMF was proclaiming in its *World Economic Outlook* that “[e]conomic and financial conditions are generally propitious for the global expansion to continue in 1997 in the medium term at rates at least those matching those seen in the past three years.”, quoted in Curiak, *Ibid.*, 157. APEC’s own economic outlook for the region in 1997 just prior to the crisis was very similar “[...] the overall growth expected in the APEC region in 1997 of 3.4 percent is only modestly slower than the 3.7 percent of 1996 and equal to the growth rate recorded in the boom of 1994. Moreover, world economic conditions are currently broadly favorable for sustained growth into 1998.” See APEC Economic Committee, *1997 APEC Economic Outlook: Economic Performance and Prospects in the APEC Region* (Singapore: APEC Secretariat, November 1997), 2.

<sup>103</sup> Only after the Thai government had spent more than 27 of its 30 billion dollars of foreign-exchange reserves trying to maintain its peg to the U.S. currency did it decided to let its currency float. Nicholas D. Kristof with Edward

beginning of the crisis just five months prior to the fifth annual leaders meeting in Vancouver, ‘Asian economic dynamism’ which had informed the imaginary for the *raison d’être* of APEC, had given way to the ‘contagious Asian flu’. For APEC boosters, the spectacular reversal was as unforeseen and devastating as was the collapse of the Soviet Union for Western sovietologists and Cold War strategists.<sup>104</sup> Precisely four days before Korea, one of the original tigers and founders of East Asian ‘economic dynamism’ (and new member of the OECD) began negotiating what would amount to a record 58.4 billion dollar bailout package with loans from the IMF, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and bilateral sources, APEC ‘economic leaders’ chose to affirm in their opening paragraph that they were “certain of the dynamism and resilience of the region”.<sup>105</sup> While more than 16 billion dollars of Korean foreign exchange reserves were evaporating

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Wyatt, ‘Who Sank, or Swam, in Choppy Currents of World Cash Ocean’, *New York Times* (February 15, 1999), A11.

<sup>104</sup> Indeed, in a special report from the Institute for International Economics published in October 1997, Lawrence Krause concluded the edited volume which assessed APEC’s progress by stating that “In my view, the outlook for APEC is quite bright. It encompasses the most dynamic region of the world, and growth engenders optimism.” See Lawrence B. Krause, ‘The Progress to Date and Agenda for the Future: A Summary’, *Whither APEC?*, 245. The editor of the volume, Bergsten, was quick to provide a new role for APEC that completely disregarded any part APEC’s discourse had in creating the conditions which lead to the crisis. In an article which appeared in *The Economist* at the magazines requests just prior to APEC’s 1998 meeting in Kuala Lumpur he suggested that the solution to the “downward spiral of the Asian economic crisis” was a “Concerted Asian Recovery Programme”. According to Bergsten, this plan would involve “sizeable fiscal and monetary stimulus’ mostly through state borrowing of funds to be provided by the Japanese government” in order to “boost demand within the crisis countries themselves through expansionary domestic policies.” ‘A Concerted Asian Recovery Programme’ noted Bergsten “would provide a dramatic centrepiece for APEC’s summit later this month. It would demonstrate, as never before, the institution’s relevance to the central concerns of its members.” C. Fred Bergsten, ‘APEC to the rescue’, *The Economist* (November 7, 1998), 21-22. Bergsten’s suggestion follows what has been the predominant prescription among most major international economic institutions: to finance a public bailout of private insolvent debt while denying that the neo-liberal agenda of trade and investment liberalization and deregulation had any responsibility in the creating the crisis.

<sup>105</sup> APEC, *Leaders’ Declaration- Vancouver* (Vancouver: APEC Secretariat, November 25, 1997).

during the months prior and after Vancouver,<sup>106</sup> the leaders's final declaration came out in full support of APEC's investment and trade liberalization agenda going so far as to renew commitment to continue working towards "facilitating flows of capital".<sup>107</sup> Thus, there was predictably no acknowledgement of the fact that the practice of politics APEC had put forth since its inception was informed by the same neo-liberal discourse which contributed to the conditions for the collapse in the first instance.<sup>108</sup> For the five members of APEC most severely hit by the crisis (Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand) facilitating the flows of private capital as APEC's discourse has promoted allowed a combined net private capital inflow of 103.2 billion dollars in 1996 turn into an outflow of 1.1 and 28.3 billion dollars in 1997 and 1998 respectively.<sup>109</sup> While this lack of official acknowledgement of the crisis in Vancouver is normally attributed to the formal state rhetoric of international summitries, and in this sense is to be understood as the talk of officialdom, it fails to capture the manner in which the division between politics and economics is

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<sup>106</sup> Timothy Lane, Atish Ghosh, Javier Hammann, Steven Phillips, Marianne Schulze-Ghattas, and Tsidi Tsikata, *IMF-Supported Programs Indonesia, Korea and Thailand: A Preliminary Assessment* (Washington D.C.: IMF occasional papers 178, 1999), 6.

<sup>107</sup> "Facilitating the flows of private capital" was part of the Vancouver Framework for Enhanced Public-Private Partnerships in Infrastructure Development. See APEC, *Leaders' Declaration- Vancouver* (Vancouver: APEC Secretariat, November 25, 1997).

<sup>108</sup> As Walden Bello argues, the discourse of liberalization and deregulation, particularly in the financial sector, contributed to allowing the unsustainable foreign private and public debt which in turn contributed to the massive flight of portefolio investment and subsequent currency speculation. See Walden Bello, 'East Asia: On the Eve of the Great Transformation?', 424-444. Walden Bello 'Addicted to Capital: The Ten-Year High and Present Day Withdrawal Trauma of SouthEast Asia's Economies' (October 12, 1997), - [http://www.corpwatch.org/trac/feature/casino\\_bello3.html](http://www.corpwatch.org/trac/feature/casino_bello3.html)-.

<sup>109</sup> Asian Development Bank, *ADB Annual Report 1998* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1998), 78. In each of these countries the outflow of capital accompanied a dramatic drop in the measurable GDP. Their combined GDP fell from 679.2 billion dollars in 1997 to 647.6 billion in 1998, with the most severe drop registered in Indonesia (215 to 89.6 billion) and Korea (442.5 to 310.1 billion). See IMF, *World Economic Outlook April 1999* (Washington D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1999).

(re)deployed in APEC's discourse. As mentioned in Chapter One, this division mirrors the one found in the Washington Consensus, which envisions a hierarchical dichotomy between politics and economics, placing the former in subservience to the latter. We find a parallel of this division within the signifiers used to characterize the economic crisis. As with 'dynamism', 'tigers', 'dragons' and 'flying geese', the signifiers 'Asian flu' and 'Asian contagion' draw an equivalence with the terrain of naturalism. What is invoked through the contagious nature of a viral infection is something which is absolute or outside of contingency and human agency. In this case, the absolute is meant to be the unconditional ground of the economic and its global market forces. 'Asian flu' and 'Asian contagion' (de)politicize economic forces by seeking to place them outside of the terrain of the political and second to the practice of politics. They tend to maintain and patrol the same divisions between politics and economics that is put forth through the practice of politics of APEC. In effect, there is a reinforcing of the division between the economic and politics by invoking a naturalization of the economic crisis. In the same way as economic reality is placed out there, the crisis, when signified as a 'flu' or 'contagion' is placed in a 'world-out-there' absent of political contingency.

The paradox is that the crisis has had the effect of severely destabilizing the neo-liberal articulation of the division between politics and economics as well as the relationship between the public and private this division generally favours. This becomes evident in the predominant response to the crisis. The total bailout package for Indonesia, Korea, and Thailand

alone amounted to over 117 billion dollars.<sup>110</sup> The repayment of these foreign funds is necessarily assumed by the state while much of the loans are used to maintain the solvency of major corporations mostly through the recapitalization of domestic financial institutions.<sup>111</sup> By recapitalizing financial institutions through foreign loans which in turn provide capital to insolvent corporations the state effectively finances a public bailout of private corporations some of which had substantial foreign debt.<sup>112</sup> In effect, the state, through foreign borrowing, maintains the solvency of nationally based institutions which in turn are able to avoid defaulting on debt payments, including most importantly for future foreign investment, those payments to foreign creditors. In this case, economic forces no longer function alone in a 'world-out-there'. Through the state structure, the public sphere assumes the responsibility of avoiding an economic collapse induced by global economic forces. Politics still remain subservient to economics insofar as a large share of the cost of the economic catastrophe is assumed by public institutions. However, politics or the public sphere becomes the ground from which the economic sphere can maintain itself and avoid collapse. The consequences for those living in the countries most severely hit by the crisis are

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<sup>110</sup> According to the IMF its commitments for each country along with those of the World Bank, the ADB and other bilateral sources amounted to 42.3 billion for Indonesia, 58.4 billion for Korea, and 17.2 billion for Thailand. See IMF, 'The IMF's Response to the Asian Crisis' (January 17, 1999), -<http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/asia.htm> -.

<sup>111</sup> As of July 1999, the Korean government for instance, had a controlling stake in approximately three-quarters of South Korea's commercial banks after it nationalized a large part of the financial system in 1998 in view of rescuing insolvent institutions and recapitalized weak ones. See BBC news online, 'Business: The Company File Daewoo creditors take control Doubts lingered about Daewoo's wish to drive forward reform' (Wednesday, July 28, 1999)-<http://news2.thls.bloc.co.uk/hi/english/world/asia-pacific/default.htm> -.

<sup>112</sup> Indeed, much of the debt was private. See Bello, 'Addicted to Capital'.

thus threefold. Not only does the population suffer from the effects of the crisis itself,<sup>113</sup> they must also assume through taxation their share of the responsibility of debt incurred by the state, and bear the brunt of the forced structural adjustment which accompanies the loans.<sup>114</sup>

What enables this to occur is the manner in which the division between politics and economics is envisioned. As I mentioned earlier, this envisioning assigns a subservient role to politics in its relation to economics while placing the latter in an unconditional 'world-out-there'. This envisioning which parallels the practice of politics (re)deployed by APEC is contained within the signifiers 'Asian flu' and 'Asian contagion'. By (re)deploying this envisioning, these signifiers unveil their political move. They contribute to drawing the frontier between politics and economics as it is drawn in APEC's discourse, and to do so is *political*.

This series of signifiers, 'miracle', 'dynamism', 'tigers', 'dragons', 'flying geese' and 'Asian flu', inform both the formal and practical discourse on the Asia-Pacific from which APEC is most often read. These are the components of the scaffolding with which is built the imaginary of this part of the world, an envisioning which, while evoking a difference compresses the region into the same. What these signifiers have in common is the manner in which they contribute to the (de)politicization of what they seek to envision. They are political not only in the manner in which

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<sup>113</sup> In Indonesia alone, arguably the most severely affected, over 1200 lives were lost during the riots in May 1998 that led to the end of the Suharto government, the same government which four years prior had hosted the 1994 meeting in Bogor where the objective of creating an APEC free trade and investment area was announced. In East Java where Bogor is located the economic collapse led to some horrific macabre events when "mysterious black-clad 'ninja' [...] killed and dismembered more than 150 sorcerers [...] Victims [were] cut into small pieces, with their body parts thrown into mosques or dangled from trees." See David Jenkins, 'Indonesia's Crisis: Tipping into Chaos', *Sydney Morning Herald* (October 26, 1998), reprinted in *World Press Review*, 46, no. 2 (1999), 6.

<sup>114</sup> Each of the initial IMF structural adjustment programs for Indonesia, Korea, and Thailand contained provisions for the increase of taxes and the decrease of public spending in view of increasing the government's ability to pay for its loans.

they inform the way the practice of politics of the 'Asia- Pacific' are viewed as different/ same, but also because they delimit a terrain of meaning from which can be invoked a particular structure which seeks to place what is envisioned outside of contingency, beyond the political. There is, therefore, a hidden political meaning revealed by the equivalences which accompanies these colourful signifiers that is (de)politicized.

### *Conclusion*

The discursive manoeuvres explored in this chapter constitute the dominant imaginary from which APEC is read and which APEC's discourse (re)deploys. Their manoeuvre lies in the fact that what is being described appears to be a constative, i.e., a determined structure, while what is obscured is their performative participation in the creation of the constative. Their move of (de)politicization lies in the manner in which the constative is instituted performatively. These manoeuvres seek to maintain the imaginary of the state and the interstate world as immutable structures sustaining the division of inside/ outside, self/ other. They serve to reinforce the idea that the outside is marked by conflict and that consequently any effort to minimize this conflict through interstate cooperation is a positive step regardless of what is the topic of cooperation. They serve to confine the imaginary space of politics within the limits of territory, eclipsing other possible forms. What is potentially being challenged, destabilized, and rendered contingent by the parallel NGO forums on APEC is precisely what these manoeuvres occult: other forms of conceiving the practice of politics. Chapter Four will seek to develop a theoretical vantage point capable of reading this challenge, while Chapter Five will examine more specifically how this challenge was articulated

**in the oppositional discourse of NGOs.**

## Chapter Four

### Democracy, the Political, and Boundaries: Deterritorializing Agonistic Democratic Politics

Deconstruction is something which happens and which happens inside: there is a deconstruction at work within Plato's work, for instance. (...) I would say the same for democracy, although the concept of democracy is a Greek heritage. This heritage is the heritage of a model, not simply a model, but a model that self-deconstructs, that deconstructs itself, so as to uproot, to become independent of its own grounds, so to speak, so that, today, philosophy is Greek and it is not Greek.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Introduction*

This chapter is concerned with articulating an understanding capable of envisioning a deterritorialized form of democracy which is consistent with the view of foundation and the political developed in Chapter Two. As such, not only does this chapter need to recall that the democratic adventure inaugurates a symbolic order in which foundation and the political are caught in a metaphysics of absence, it must also explore how this understanding of democracy can lead to a deterritorialization of the 'democratic imaginary' capable of accounting for social contestation. In fact, this chapter will seek to show that it is only once we operate from the vantage point of democracy as a form of symbolic ordering of social relations that we can begin to envision a deterritorialization of democracy. It is from this view that the second objective of this chapter may be fulfilled since it is by means of this understanding that we may be able to view APEC and the

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt of a roundtable discussion with Jacques Derrida. The text of the roundtable is reproduced in John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell. A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 12.

parallel 'People's Summits' organized by non governmental organizations (NGOs) as an instance in which the *possibility* is opened towards a *deterritorialization of the democratic imaginary*. As mentioned in Chapter One, the possibility that is opened stems from how the NGO discourse of contestation may seize in its articulation elements of the democratic imaginary which exceed territoriality. More specifically, my contention is that the opposition problematizes territory as a 'marker of certainty'. In this sense, APEC, and its relation to the organized opposition it has elicited among the NGO community since its 1993 meeting of heads of state in Seattle, raises important theoretical questions about the predominant place and understanding that has been assigned to democracy both in the field of international theory (IT) as well as within the field of political thought. In IT, the questions and issues that are generally theorized are said to stem from, or function in, a world outside of the democratic experience inasmuch as their intersection, at one point or another, with the anarchical world of states is seen as fundamentally antithetical to democracy. There are no corresponding institutions within world politics that could allow for some form of democratic control of decision making at an international level. This is why those few who have sought to theorize democracy from the standpoint of IT usually recommend the expansion of democratic institutions beyond national territorial boundaries. The objective is to create an accountable and transparent structure of governance which could correspond to the dimension of current economic, political and social issues.<sup>2</sup> With regard to political thought, democracy is generally theorized explicitly or implicitly with a notion of space circumscribed by the territorial

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<sup>2</sup> This is notably the case for the work of David Held. See for instance, David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), David Held 'Democracy: Past, Present, and Possible Futures', *Alternatives*, 18, (1993), 259-271, David Held, 'Democracy and Globalization', *Alternatives*, 16 (1991), 201-208.

boundaries of states.<sup>3</sup> Democracy is understood to be a form of political regime with a corresponding form of government functioning within a territorial jurisdiction separate from others. Associated with rights for its citizens who consent to being governed by state representatives held accountable through periodic voting, the democratic regime is understood to be national not global. Thus, it would be fair to say that both traditional IT and political thought have, in differing degrees, aided in keeping democracy territorialized. In this sense, the equivalence between democracy and territory has been the result of a specific discursive articulation reinforced from the outside by IT and from the inside by political thought. However, as globalization becomes more prevalent *as a discourse on the social*, and consequently a site of antagonism, the (re)instituting of the inside/outside spacial demarcation as immutable structures which necessarily contain democracy are opened to their contingent foundation. In other words, as the markers of certainty which confined the democratic experience to territory become embroiled in the antagonisms produced by the discourse of globalization, these same markers can lose their apparent foundational status which was previously able to occult the possibility of deterritorializing democracy.

In this chapter, I start from the assumption that the organized NGO opposition to APEC opens the possibility to an articulation of a non-territorialized form of democracy despite the fact that APEC lives in that world which is generally seen as antithetical to a democratic experience both by traditional IT and political thought. Whether this possibility is captured in the NGO discourse will be examined in detail in Chapter Five. At first glance, equating democracy with the APEC/ NGO relationship would seem quite peculiar when we consider how organized opposition

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<sup>3</sup> On this argument see Gilles Labelle, 'La démocratie à la fin du XXe siècle: triomphante mais inquiète', *Politique et sociétés*, 16, no. 3 (1997), 82.

to APEC has been dealt with in the past. Indeed, various forms of organized state repression (some more violent than others) of largely peaceful protest has been a feature of APEC's annual leaders meeting since the heads of state met in Bogor, Indonesia in 1994.<sup>4</sup> Even when the annual leaders meeting was held in the institutional democracies of APEC such as Canada, dissent has been met with state repression. Peaceful demonstrators in Vancouver in 1997 were 'pepper sprayed' by police, and more than 45 people were arrested.<sup>5</sup> Some were arrested for merely displaying signs with "free speech", "democracy", and "human rights" written on them,<sup>6</sup> while others were literally abducted by undercover police officers.<sup>7</sup> Security operations for the APEC meetings in Vancouver were among the largest organized in the RCMP's history.<sup>8</sup> Entire sections of the city of Vancouver were termed "closed security zones" and could not be accessed by the general public.<sup>9</sup> The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canada's national law enforcement agency responsible for

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<sup>4</sup> The NGO opposition in Indonesia will be explored in more detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>5</sup> Jeff Sallot, 'Human-Rights Protest Noisy but Non-Violent', *Globe and Mail* (November 26, 1997), A8. Some had to agree to sign statements they would no longer protest against APEC or any of its members in exchange for their release from police custody.

<sup>6</sup> Ross Howard and Jane Armstrong, 'PM Endorsed Decision, Letter Shows' *The Globe and Mail* (Thursday, October 8, 1998), A9.

<sup>7</sup> One demonstrator, a former student and organizer of the 'APEC Alert Network', an anti-APEC student group, was arrested in a manner reminiscent of a Cold War spy novel. The former student was forced into an unmarked police vehicle by three plain cloths RCMP officers as he was walking on the campus grounds of the University of British Columbia. At the time, the official reason for the arrest was that he had been charged in a previous incident with common assault for "shouting in a megaphone and allegedly damaging the ear of a security guard". However, it was later revealed during an internal RCMP inquiry that the person in question had been targeted prior to the APEC meetings by the RCMP as a potential protester, suggesting he was not arrested for alleged criminal acts but for his potential role as a leading figure among student demonstrators. See David Hogben, 'Police Accused of Suppressing Students' Rights', *The Vancouver Sun* (November 25, 1997), A12, and Jane Armstrong and John Saunders, 'Police Made Pre-emptive Arrest at Summit' *The Globe and Mail* (Thursday, September 24, 1998), A1

<sup>8</sup> Security personnel included 500 Vancouver police officers, 2,500 RCMP officers and 1,000 military personnel. See Petti Fong and David Hogben, 'Traffic Woes Expected to Grow with Road Closure', *The Vancouver Sun* (November 22, 1997), A19.

<sup>9</sup> *The Vancouver Sun* (November 20, 1997), C1.

security arrangements at the APEC meetings, maintained that removing protesters and their signs was necessary in order to assure the security of visiting APEC delegates.<sup>10</sup> Aside from the more overt forms of suppression of democratic dissent, it was later suggested through government and police documents released during an internal inquiry by the RCMP public complaints committee into the handling of anti-APEC demonstrators that police officers were acting to stifle protest on the demands made by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the central political component of the executive branch of the Canadian government, and not on the basis of security.<sup>11</sup> What this suggests is that the executive branch of the Canadian government directly influenced the RCMP's actions based on the politics of international diplomacy. Thus, this implies that the autonomy of Canada's national law enforcement agency was compromised and along with it the institutions of Canadian democracy which are meant to ensure the autonomy of branches of government and preserve the democratic principle of liberty.

In light of the events in Vancouver, it would seem quite contradictory to maintain the argument proposed here that somehow the APEC/ NGO relation opens the possibility to

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<sup>10</sup> Hogden 'Police Accused of Suppressing Students' Rights'. In fact, protesters were told by police that they were to stay a minimum of 100 metres away from any "internationally protected persons or any of the 5,000 accredited delegates." This despite the fact that the RCMP's own intelligence service branch, the National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS) had, through extensive surveillance of anti-APEC groups prior to the meetings, concluded that "some of these individuals may engage in civil disobedience, however [...] none are considered violent." Document released through an inquiry launched by the RCMP's own internal public complaints committee in reaction to the handling of protesters by officers obtained from - <http://www.tv.cbc.ca/national/pgminfo/apec/docindex.html> - July 15 (1999).

<sup>11</sup> Jeff Sallot and Ross Howard, 'Outcry over Way RCMP Handled Suharto 'Protest'', *The Globe and Mail* (September 10, 1998), A4. In particular, the PMO was concerned that demonstrators would embarrass Indonesian President Suharto since many of them were specifically protesting the Indonesian government's occupation of East Timor. The East Timor Alert Network (ETAN) had mounted an extensive anti-Suharto poster campaign in Canada which had caught the attention of Indonesian government representatives. The Prime Minister of Canada himself offered his assurance in a written letter to Suharto that "no effort [would be spared] to ensure that appropriate security and other arrangements [would be made] for your stay in Canada as our guest" thereby suggesting that 'other arrangements' may include removing unsightly protestors and their signs. Letter from Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to former President Suharto, dated October 3, 1997.

articulate discursively a form of non-territorialized democracy. Indeed, these events would seem to confirm the opposite, that when the international politics of economic globalization, of which APEC is seen as a component, come in conflict with the democratic practices of an institutional democracy the former easily override the latter. That the institutions of Canadian democracy were compromised for the high politics of trade diplomacy is not in itself of central importance to this chapter. Indeed, the discourse of international relations since its inception has enabled and largely sought to maintain the politics of interstate relations outside any form of democratic accountability. Such dichotomies as inside/ outside, domestic/ foreign, sovereignty/ anarchy have enabled this to occur. Where the events in Vancouver are of particular relevance to this chapter is found in how they have contributed to strengthening the antagonism which opens the possibility of articulating what APEC's discourse occults: a form of democracy that supercedes state boundaries, a form of non-territorialized democracy which encompasses APEC. In other words, the suspension of one form of democracy (the institutional and territorial form) served to reinforce the antagonism which contributed to the *possibility* of deterritorialization democracy. As argued in Chapter One, the fact that APEC and its practice of politics have met with sustained opposition, have become the site of multiple antagonisms on issues of human rights, ecology, sustainable development, labour rights, gender, third world worker rights, and so on, suggests that democracy is not primarily institutional but rather is symbolic and supersedes forms of government. In this sense, there is a democracy outside of its institutional form, a democracy which escapes territorialization despite the fact it may continue to function from the confines of territorial space as it did in Vancouver. My argument is that the 'democratic adventure' provides the symbolic ordering of social relations from which the NGO opposition to that which normally falls outside of the democratic imaginary, i.e., an international

economic organization, is enabled. Whether this leads to a deterritorialization of democratic imaginary however, depends entirely on how the NGO discourse is articulated. More specifically, as was argued in Chapter One, deterritorializing democracy means disaggregating territoriality from the democratic imaginary in such a manner as to displace territory as an imagined space from the series of equivalences that generally accompanies our understanding of democracy. It is perhaps important to reiterate at this point that deterritorializing democracy would not entail moving towards some form of cosmopolitan government. Nor does it mean unveiling a Kantian humanism capable of unifying the world. Rather, opening the possibility for a deterritorialization democracy merely entails ‘problematizing’ the markers of certainty of the inter-state world which have obscured the democratic imaginary from its realm. It entails deepening and expanding the principles of the democratic imaginary in a ‘space’, i.e., that of the international, which has tended to be sheltered from their effects. The second argument of this thesis contends that the NGO opposition to APEC provides this possibility.

What follows will seek to elaborate upon the theoretical stance from which the APEC/ NGO relation could be seen as opening the possibility towards a form of deterritorialized democracy while, as indicated above, remaining consistent with the view of the political and foundation offered in Chapter Two. As such, the understanding of democracy proposed here remains largely framed by the view of democracy proposed by Claude Lefort. However, Chapter Two was more directly concerned with setting out the epistemological grounding of the thesis from which the discourse of APEC and the NGO parallel forums was to be viewed. Lefort’s thinking on democracy provided the central ‘*mise en scène*’ from which this relation could be seen in a manner consistent with a metaphysics of absence. What remains to be done is to place this framework in its more

practical setting as well as move away from the implicit notion of territorially circumscribed social space prevalent in Lefort's work on democracy. As such, my objective in this chapter is to formulate a practical project at the level of the practice of politics by articulating a non-territorialized understanding of democracy based on the understanding of foundation and the political put forth in Chapter Two. By practical project I mean that I am seeking to offer an explanation as to *why*, *when*, *how* and from *what* discursive ground the social struggle of the NGOs opposing APEC could potentially open the possibility for a deterritorialization of democratic imaginary. Whether it is in practice however, depends upon the manner in which the discourse of NGOs is formulated, which will be the concern of Chapter Five. My contention is that the body work which has sought to articulate what, following Seyla Benhabib, one could term an "agonistic model of democratic politics"<sup>12</sup> can enable us to articulate this practical political project. With my agonistic model of democratic politics I specifically intend to reunite the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe with that of William Connolly which, while remaining consistent with the view of foundation and the political proposed in this thesis, may offer an understanding as to the manner in which a deterritorialization of the democratic imaginary could occur. It is from this understanding that the APEC/ NGO relation will be read. It is its focus on *agonism*, the democratic form of the *antagonistic* quality of the political explored in Chapter Two, which links Laclau and Mouffe's 'Radical Democracy'<sup>13</sup> with Connolly's articulation of a 'agonistic respect' and 'Democratic Ethos'. Although Connolly's work on democracy and his usage of the notion of 'agonistic respect' proposes

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<sup>12</sup> Seyla Benhabib, 'The Democratic Moment and the Problem of Difference', in *Democracy and Difference. Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Radical Democracy appears in capital letters when it refers to the specific body of work of Laclau and Mouffe.

a very similar view of democracy to that put forth by Laclau and Mouffe, his work stems from an entirely different body of political theory which could only very tenuously be seen as stemming from the same post-Marxist heritage as that of Laclau and Mouffe.<sup>14</sup>

Despite their substantially different intellectual trajectories, both Connolly, and Laclau and Mouffe do have one common intellectual debt which conditions their understanding of democracy and which also is of central importance for this thesis: their debt to Lefort. Indeed, these authors acknowledge (although sometimes only marginally<sup>15</sup>) their use of Lefort's work on democracy most often summarized by his contention explored in Chapter Two that democracy institutes symbolically through the '*mise en forme*' of the social the 'dissolution of the markers of certainty' by emptying the place of power. It is within this frame that we can locate the broad view of democracy that informs the work of both Laclau and Mouffe as well as that of Connolly, and it is in this broad view of democracy that I place my deterritorialized agonistic model of democratic politics.

By reuniting the work of these authors I intend to take from Laclau and Mouffe more specifically their theorization as to *why* and *when* social struggle comes about within the symbolic order of democracy and *how* and upon *what* discursive basis social struggle could be organized. My

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<sup>14</sup> See in particular William E. Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), William E. Connolly, *Identity/ Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), and William E. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> This is the case for Connolly who in a footnote to an article on democracy and territoriality states that "Lefort's characterization of democracy is closer to my own than any other considered in this essay". This statement seems somewhat difficult to maintain considering the fact that Lefort's work on democracy comes much earlier than Connolly's. As such, it is not Lefort's understanding of democracy that comes close to Connolly's but rather the obverse. See William E. Connolly, 'Democracy and Territoriality', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 3 (1991) fn. 32, 484. Ironically, a more truthful acknowledgement of Connolly's debt to Lefort appears in the revised publication of this article in Connolly's *Ethos of Pluralization*, fn. 29, 227.

contention is that this theorization creates the opportunity to deterritorialize a 'model of agonistic democratic politics' despite the fact that Laclau and Mouffe never pursue this possibility. The reason this path is generally foreclosed in their thinking stems in part from the vantage point from which they begin, i.e., that of community, as well as the view of globalization which informs certain aspects of their thinking. From the vantage point of community globalization is problematized precisely as a problem which limits the political project of an agonistic model of democratic politics. It is not therefore seen as an antagonistic political discourse which could, in certain instances through the antagonisms it engenders, open the possibility for a deterritorialization of democracy. From Connolly, I intend to use his view of identity/ difference (one which is similar to Laclau and Mouffe's which I examine briefly in Chapter Two), as well as his brief exploration of the possibility of deterritorializing democracy. Where Connolly's thinking requires elaboration is with respect to *how* the deterritorialization of democracy could occur. Again, my contention is that this *how* is to be found in Laclau and Mouffe's work on Radical Democracy.

***The problem of globalization for Radical Democracy's agonistic model of democratic politics***

As mentioned above, Laclau and Mouffe did allow for the objective of this chapter, that is their own theorization did allow for a deterritorialization of their understanding of democracy. They write:

*The autonomy of the State as a whole- assuming for a moment that we can speak of it as a unity- depends on the construction of a political space which can only be the result of hegemonic articulations. And something similar can be said for the degree of unity and autonomy existing among the different branches and apparatuses of the State. That is, the autonomization of certain spheres is not the necessary structural effect of anything, but rather the result of precise articulatory practices constructing*

that autonomy. *Autonomy, far from being incompatible with hegemony, is a form of hegemonic construction.*<sup>16</sup>

By stating that the autonomy of the territorially grounded political space of the state is the result of a politically constructed *hegemonic articulation* Laclau and Mouffe are effectively arguing, as has been done by certain authors in IT such as David Campbell, that the state and the interstate world has no grounding outside of its discursive construction. In other words, the state, and by extension the interstate system, has no ontological status prior to discursivity. That it appears as if it does results from the hegemonic or dominant articulation of the discursive formation which sustains the state political imaginary in a territorial form. If the state and the interstate world as well as the generative dichotomies of its corresponding discursive economy (sovereignty/ anarchy, cooperation/ conflict, inside/ outside, domestic/ foreign) are results of hegemonic articulations then one can presume that an understanding of democracy that is necessarily circumscribed by the territorial space of states is also the result of a hegemonic articulation. Consequently, such an articulation is, despite being hegemonic, always contingent and open to rearticulation. Laclau and Mouffe do not elaborate with any detail on what is suggested in the above quote about the possibility of a deterritorialization of democracy despite the fact that, as I will highlight later, their theorization does offer a possible explanation as to how this deterritorialization could occur.

Granted, deterritorializing democracy was not their objective nor was it the vantage point from which they sought to formulate their understanding of Radical Democracy. The objective of Radical Democracy has been to *deepen* and *expand* the democratic principles of *liberty* and

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<sup>16</sup> Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), 140 (first emphasis added).

*equality*<sup>17</sup> and the vantage point for doing so has always been some form of ‘localized community’ even though their thinking reveals the impossibility of constituting definite foundations upon which could be constructed the parameters of any form of community. This is not some form of inconsistency in their thinking. Rather, it is an acknowledgement of the constitutive tension within the social that inaugurated with the democratic symbolic. As Laclau states, even though the symbolic order of democracy institutes the ‘infinite of the social’ or the impossibility of giving the social a figure, he goes on to claim that “[t]he social *only exists* as the vain attempt to institute that impossible object: *society*.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, the fact that democracy institutes and relies upon the disincorporation of the social body leads to that constant tension with the political’s attempt at reincorporating the social, at establishing foundation for the social leading to the entrenchment of social frontiers demarcating an inside from an outside. With the term ‘society’ Laclau implicitly locates the experience of a metaphysics of absence consistent with his and Mouffe’s thinking within a circumscribed social space distinct from others. This leads to an indirect form of territorializing the experience of a metaphysics of absence. As such, if one follows Laclau closely on this point our attempt at deterritorializing democracy might be foreclosed since that experience seems to be confined to a territorial conception of space. We can find similar limits to the possibility of deterritorializing an agonistic model of democratic politics in Mouffe’s work subsequent to her collaboration with Laclau. These limits are made evident in Mouffe’s usage of the ‘friend/ enemy’

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<sup>17</sup> This formulation of the objective of Radical Democracy is more specific to Mouffe’s work subsequent to ‘Hegemony and Socialist Strategy’. In this collaboration with Laclau, the stated objective is to “struggle for a maximum autonomization of spheres on the basis of the generalization of the equivalential-egalitarian logic.” Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 167. We will explore this equivalential-egalitarian logic latter in this chapter.

<sup>18</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections of the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), 92.

dichotomy that she borrows from Carl Schmitt<sup>19</sup> as well as her understanding of ‘globalization’.<sup>20</sup>

Mouffe deploys Schmitt’s friend/ enemy dichotomy in order to navigate from the irreducibility of *antagonism* to its democratic form of *agonism*. We saw in Chapter Two what the irreducibility of antagonism or social division meant for Laclau and Mouffe. Recall that emptying the place of power has the effect of lodging social division *within* the social and leaving the question of social division as well as questions of identity open since relations of the ‘self’ to the ‘other’ are no longer symbolically mediated by a figure. Social division is mediated by an empty place and thus remains unfigurable and undetermined. Within this symbolic context, division *within* the social is instituted with, and is constitutive of, the ‘*mise en forme*’ of the social because that division remains unfigurable and unresolved. The symbolic order of the democratic adventure is constituted by, and sustains antagonism within the social and therefore antagonism is always present. It is the irreducible antagonism instituted with the ‘*mise en forme*’ of democracy which leads Mouffe to view any form of final consensus or totalizing understanding of the social as fundamentally antithetical to the democratic adventure since any discourse seeking a social consensus would occult social division. However, what the democratic adventure also enables according to Mouffe is the transformation of *antagonism* into *agonism*.

Following her reading of Schmitt, Mouffe contends that, subsequent to the Second World War, certain Western political institutions such as the left/ right split among political parties

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<sup>19</sup> See in particular, Chantal Mouffe, ‘Carl Schmitt and the Paradox of Liberal Democracy’ in *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt* ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1999), 38-53.

<sup>20</sup> For a different understanding of the relationship between ‘space’ and the project of Radical Democracy which stems from the discipline of geography see Doreen Massey, ‘Thinking Radical Democracy Spatially’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13 (1995), 283-288, Wolfgang Natter, ‘Radical Democracy: Hegemony, Reason, Time and Space’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13 (1995), 267-274, and Michael Brown, ‘The Cultural Saliency of Radical Democracy: Moments from the AIDS Quilt’, *Ecumene* 4, no. 1 (1997), 27-45.

gave an outlet to social division and was able to transform antagonistic social relations (friend/ enemy) into agonistic ones (friend/ adversary).<sup>21</sup> Whereas the friend/ enemy articulation of antagonistic social relations may entail physical violence, agonistic social relations recognize the legitimacy of conflict by viewing the ‘other’ not as an enemy to be eliminated but as a legitimate adversary.<sup>22</sup> Regardless of their respective political and social projects, the left/ right split gave social division a partial outlet according to Mouffe, which for a time was able to express the antagonistic quality of the political in an agonistic form. The legitimacy of real opposing positions among established political parties was able to transform social antagonism into agonism at least at the level of the conventional practice of politics, i.e., those framed and legitimized by the state through its institutions.

For Mouffe, the possibility of articulating the friend/ enemy relation into the friend/ adversary logically entails distinguishing those who are the ‘friends’ from those who are the ‘adversaries’. Establishing this division between an ‘us’ and a ‘them’ is necessary in order to recognize the legitimacy of conflict which for Mouffe is not only an implicit acknowledgement of the irreducibility of social division within the democratic symbolic order, but also expresses the ‘self’/ ‘other’ dichotomy necessary for identity formation. The only way to identify the ‘us’ from the ‘them’ is by locating some form of ‘commonality’ capable of reuniting the ‘us’. Mouffe stresses

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<sup>21</sup> Chantal Mouffe, *Le politique et ses enjeux* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte/MAUSS, 1994), 10.

<sup>22</sup> For Mouffe, within the context of the democratic symbolic order there is always a tension between an agonistic articulation of social relations and an antagonistic one. In other words, there is always a risk of agonism turning into antagonism, that those who are seen as adversaries become enemies. In this sense, the tension between the two political articulations of social relations reproduces the same tension we find in Lefort’s view of the relation between democracy and totalitarianism.

that this commonality must be circumscribed or located within the “demos”, the people.<sup>23</sup> The ‘people’ becomes the frame in which identity is constituted through the friend/ adversary dichotomy. As she states: “[w]ithout a plurality of competing forces which attempt to define the common good, and aim at fixing the identity of the community, the political articulation of the demos could not take place.”<sup>24</sup> The ‘demos’ is the space and place from which the friend/ adversary dichotomy is to be worked out. For Mouffe, those who would choose ‘humanity’ or some form of ‘cosmopolitan’ identity as the frame risk neglecting not only the need for an ‘us’ and a ‘them’ constitutive of identity formation but also risk occulting the irreducibility of antagonism.<sup>25</sup> Within this context, the project of an agonistic model of democratic politics which is to transform antagonism into agonism should coincide with the territorial living space of the ‘people’ separate from others. The equivalence is made between the objective of an agonistic model of democratic politics and the confines of the territorial space of ‘the people’. It is this equivalence which informs Mouffe’s negative view of ‘globalization’.

For Mouffe, the processes of globalization creates a situation in which the state risks losing its democratic *political* role (i.e., as a public site for transformation of the irreducible antagonism into agonism) in favour of what Foucault identified as “governmentality”.<sup>26</sup> The neo-liberal discourse associated with globalization deploys the idea that there is an overwhelming

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<sup>23</sup> Mouffe, ‘Carl Schmitt and the Paradox of Liberal Democracy’, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>25</sup> Mouffe refers to David Held’s, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), and Richard Falk, *On Humane Governance: Towards a New Global Politics* (University Park Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> Mouffe, ‘Carl Schmitt and the Paradox of Liberal Democracy’, 42.

consensus in society as to the chosen direction towards less state intervention and the rule of free-market economics needed for a competitive global environment. This is what Mouffe sees as the move in certain Western democracies towards the “Republic of the Centre”,<sup>27</sup> echoing what Robert Cox in IT has termed the “hyperliberal state”. The hyperliberal state functions as a one way transmission belt for the demands of economic globalization. Rather than functioning as bulkhead moderating the impact of the forces of globalization on the population as was the case for the welfare state, the hyperliberal state now becomes a conduit for such forces.<sup>28</sup> As Cox has pointed out, the consensus upon which the hyperliberal state seeks to ground its practice of politics is born of “a transnational process of consensus formation among the official caretakers of the global economy.”<sup>29</sup> As a one way transmission belt, the hyperliberal state leads to an internationalization of the late twentieth century state form inasmuch as the direction of national policy in practically every fora is developed from the same backdrop of the “perceived exigencies of the global economy”.<sup>30</sup> As a one way transmission belt for globalization, the state is seen as being increasingly reduced to an instrumental role fulfilling the demands of economic globalization rather than as a site capable of addressing social antagonism.

For Mouffe, the consensus at the level of the practice of politics, *la politique* which marks this new state form occults the irreducible antagonism that marks the political, *le politique*.

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<sup>27</sup> Chantal Mouffe, ‘The End of Politics and the Rise of the Radical Right’, *Dissent* (Fall 1995), 499.

<sup>28</sup> Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 286-290.

<sup>29</sup> Robert W. Cox, ‘Global *Perestroika*’ in *New World Order? Socialist Register 1992*, eds. Ralph Miliband and Leo Panitch (London: Merlin Press, 1992), 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

Consensus does not allow for the symbolic order of democracy which, as mentioned earlier, for a certain time was able to vent social antagonism through the practice of politics of the left/ right spectrum among established political parties. Mouffe contends that the Republic of the Centre no longer offers real opposing socio-political alternatives since the left in Western countries is seen as having largely adopted the neo-liberal discourse. As such, the state tends to lose its role as a site for identity formation in favour of its role as an economic manager, i.e., the move towards governmentality. The institutionalization of conflict inaugurated with the democratic symbolic order which was previously given a voice through opposing political parties is consequently no longer recognizable in its institutional form. It is for this reason that the idea of consensus which informs the Republic of the Centre (or the hyperliberal state) is a threat to liberal democracies for Mouffe. Since the notion of consensus deploys the idea of a unified social body under a unified view of the world, it does not allow for the antagonism which marks the political to be adequately voiced and correspondingly transformed into agonism. And to the extent that the economic processes of globalization participate to a large degree in informing the 'no choice' behind the consensus of the neo-liberal discourses of the Republic of the Centre, Mouffe suggests that globalization contributes to severely undermining democracy in certain Western countries by reinforcing the myth of consensus. The example that Mouffe uses to support her argumentation that Western liberal democracies are in fact not at the victorious final synthesis marking the 'end of history' but rather face a critical and dangerous juncture is the rise of elements of the radical right in various parts of the world.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Francis Fukuyama's view of the 'end of history' as the final synthesis of democracy occupies, either explicitly or implicitly, an important counter position in many of Mouffe's articles. See for instance Mouffe, *Le politique et ses enjeux*, 7-25.

For Mouffe, the myth of consensus which accompanies the Republic of the Centre contributes to fostering the proper conditions for the rise of the radical right which is able to exploit the fear of those who do not see themselves within the terrain of the consensus or which more specifically are excluded by its articulation.<sup>32</sup> Without a vent, an alternative political position, the radical right seizes upon the ability to articulate the political in terms of antagonism (friend/ enemy) where the 'other' is no longer a legitimate adversary (as is the case in the agonistic friend/ adversary articulation of the political), but an enemy corrupting the collective identity of the organic social body often expressed in terms of a religious, an ethnic, or a nationalistic social body.<sup>33</sup> The negative social impact of globalization (e.g., loss of jobs, deteriorating social values, lost of national identity and so on) is often deployed by the radical right in its construction of the enemy largely seen as the immigrant population corrupting a pristine national identity. As such, what Mouffe is suggesting in her argumentation is that the myth of social consensus deployed by discourses of economic globalization opens the door for the radical right's articulation of an *antagonistic* political discourse, and thus by extension globalization is contributing in undermining the *agonistic* political articulation afforded by the previous left/ right split in Western liberal democracies.<sup>34</sup> Territorial

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<sup>32</sup> Mouffe, 'The End of Politics and the Rise of the Radical Right', 498.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 502.

<sup>34</sup> One should note that the articulation of an antagonistic political discourse does not stem only from reactionary movements to the processes of globalization such as the radical right. As Cox highlighted the construction of the consensus itself upon which is founded the Republic of the Centre also actively creates antagonistic social relations in its designation of certain unwanted groups in society. As Cox states: "[The] confrontational posture of the would-be hyperliberal state toward the various excluded groups requires a new basis in legitimacy [...] The answer has been sought in a nonhegemonic, populist appeal to the sanctity of traditional values. At the oritirical level, the new legitimacy stresses the work ethic, family, neighborhood, and patriotism. At a subliminal level, the appeal is tinged with racism- against immigrants and minorities stereotyped inconsistently both as welfare bums and as threats to jobs." Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order*, 288.

democracy becomes a victim of economic globalization insofar as the latter reinforces the myth of social consensus underlying the Republic of the Centre and does not allow for antagonism in society to be voiced in the form of opposing world views transforming them into agonistic social relations.

Although I agree with Mouffe that the discourse of economic globalization and myth of social consensus it deploys is antithetical to an agonistic model of democratic politics, I would suggest that globalization as a political discourse can also be a site of antagonism which contributes to subverting the consensus of neo-liberalism and thereby opens the possibility towards the ultimate objective of agonistic democracy, i.e., to deepen and expand democratic principles. The antagonisms that are produced by the consensus of the discourse of economic globalization do not inevitably threaten a project which seeks to develop an agonistic model of democratic politics. There is nothing in the antagonism itself that precludes it from being articulated in an agonistic form. As a political discourse which produces antagonisms, economic globalization, *like any other political discourse*, deploys a discourse on the social which by producing antagonisms is open to rearticulations. Even though this discourse on the social is not framed within the institutions of democracy it does not mean that its possible rearticulations may not coincide with the democratic imaginary. In particular, where those rearticulations may be of interest is how they open the possibility of deterritorializing the democratic imaginary.

Paradoxically, this is where APEC comes in. I say paradoxically because arguably nowhere, within the context of such international forums, is the neo-liberal discourse of economic globalization and its corresponding consensus myth more candidly deployed than with APEC. In fact, through annual leaders meeting, one could say that APEC tends to wear this consensus on its sleeve. In many respects, APEC is precisely what Mouffe (as well as Cox) is invoking when she

speaks of the negative consequences of the ‘processes of economic globalization’ and the rise of the Republic of the Centre. APEC’s usage of the terms ‘member economies’ and ‘economic leaders’ tends to invoke the same view of politics which one finds at the heart of the Republic of the Centre. As such, that APEC is part of the processes of globalization that Mouffe sees as fundamentally detrimental to democracy is not being disputed. And yet arguably nowhere has the consensus on the neo-liberal agenda as it is articulated at an international level been more the object of subversion than with APEC. In fact, as we will see in Chapter Five, it would seem that the more APEC has voiced an apparent consensus on the neo-liberal agenda in regards to economic globalization the more it has sustained the NGOs’ subversion of this myth of social consensus. What is interesting is that this subversion has largely been expressed by NGOs in terms of *agonism*. In other words, the processes of globalization to which APEC contributes, has not in this case nourished *antagonism* in lieu of *agonism*. As we will see in Chapter Five, the protest has mostly followed the lines of the friend/ adversary dichotomy even though there are occasions where APEC/ globalization is viewed as ‘the enemy’. It is at this juncture that the reading provided by Laclau and Mouffe of a model of agonistic democratic politics must be broadened. With my reading of the parallel NGO forums on APEC what I am proposing extends Radical Democracy beyond its predisposition to focus on an explicit or implicit notion of territorialized social space as its point of departure. Therefore, rather than using the ‘demos’ as the necessary frame for agonistic democracy as is argued by Mouffe what I am proposing here is to use the *antagonism itself* which is contained within APEC’s discourse on economic globalization. In other words, the necessary space of ‘commonality’ from which the friend/ enemy relationship can be articulated in terms of the friend/ adversary is produced by the antagonism, not the ‘demos’. In the case of interest to this thesis, the antagonism is not

circumscribed by the boundaries of states to the extent that the NGOs who oppose APEC are not limited to one territorial space even though most are bureaucratically organized along the interstate world. The fact that the space produced by the antagonism does not coincide with the territorial space of an institutional democracy has not precluded the possibility of accessing the democratic imaginary, thereby transforming the antagonism into its agonistic form. The relationship between APEC and the NGO forums appears largely agonistic rather than antagonistic. Indeed, as we will see in our analysis of the ‘forum declarations’ in the following chapter, one of the central nodal points around which these declarations have been articulated is democracy. This is where lies the *potential* for a deterritorialization of the democratic experience while remaining within the context of a model of agonistic democratic politics. The NGO opposition to APEC may provide a successful deterritorialization of a model of agonistic democratic politics despite the fact that it is produced by the discourse of economic globalization and that it does not occur within the confines of a ‘demos’ (the two problems which Mouffe associates with the processes of globalization). For that potential to be secured however, the NGO discourse of opposition would have to articulate itself by deploying the elements of the democratic imaginary which exceed territoriality. In other words, there would have to be a problematization of the markers of certainty that have confined the democratic imaginary to territoriality. Even though the democratic adventure provides the symbolic ordering of social relations which allow for the NGO opposition to APEC to occur, whether that opposition leads to a deterritorialization of the democratic imaginary depends entirely on the manner the discourse is formulated.

Less it be unclear, in my criticism of Laclau and Mouffe I do not want to suggest that the project of Radical Democracy is somehow ill founded in starting from the vantage point of

‘community’. What I am suggesting however, is that the discourse of globalization may also provide sites for the practice of politics of an agonistic model of democratic politics even though it does not offer the traditional institutions of territorial democracy which Mouffe sees as important for the transformation of antagonistic social relations into agonistic ones. It may not be the territorial democracy of states that is being subverted by globalization, but the political imaginary of an interstate world that is subverting globalization’s occasional democratic opening.

One last element with respect to the relation between globalization and an agonistic model of democratic politics needs to be highlighted before I explore more precisely how we can deterritorialize democracy as it was proposed at the beginning of this chapter. I mentioned earlier that Mouffe tends to suggest that territorial democracy risks becoming a victim of globalization through the enforcement by the state of the consensus that economic globalization deploys. I would suggest that this is a general view of the relation between democracy and globalization both in political thought and in IT. In fact, even those few such as David Held who have sought to theorize a form of non-territorialized democracy that would coincide with the current globalized political, economic, social, and cultural world do so with a view of globalization as a *problem* for democracy which generally needs to be surmounted.<sup>35</sup> In light of the problem of globalization for democracy, one possible response is the reinforcement of democracy’s territoriality. There are definite merits to this alternative inasmuch as, in the era of the hyperliberal state, efforts to increase state accountability through existing institutions does offer possible avenues for the objective of an agonistic model of democratic politics. On the other hand, there are also certain risks in

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<sup>35</sup> Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*.

territorializing any form of democracy which have been aptly highlighted by Connolly in his reading of Tocqueville.<sup>36</sup>

Echoing views in the field of critical geopolitics,<sup>37</sup> Connolly reminds us that territorialization, even in the guise of democracy, involves violence. Invoking the tension between the two roots of the term, the more common *Terra* (meaning land, earth, nourishment, sustenance) and territory's root form *terrēre* and *territōrium* (meaning respectively to terrorize and a place from which people are warned off), Connolly shows how Tocqueville's reading of democracy in America established "correspondences between people, territory, state, unity, freedom, and legitimacy".<sup>38</sup> The effect of territorializing democracy in America was to, among other things, destroy the nomadic way of life of American aboriginals since nomadism does not coincide with the series of correspondences involved in Tocqueville's view of democracy. By placing space implicitly or explicitly circumscribed by territory as the privileged starting point there is a possibility of deploying a form of unacknowledged geopolitics. As Gearóid Ó Tuathail has shown, to geopoliticize is precisely to unrecognize and unacknowledge the textuality of geographical space.<sup>39</sup> A geopolitical reasoning would take as unpolitical the equivalence between democracy, territory, and the people

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<sup>36</sup> William E. Connolly, 'Tocqueville, Territory, and Violence', in *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities* eds. Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 141-164.

<sup>37</sup> See for instance, Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1996), Gearóid Ó Tuathail, '(Dis)placing Geopolitics: Writing on the Maps of Global Politics', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 12, (1994), 525-546, *Rethinking Geopolitics*, eds., Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby (London: Routledge, 1998), in particular Ó Tuathail and Dalby's 'Introduction' and Ó Tuathail's chapter, 'Postmodern Geopolitics? The Modern Geopolitical Imagination and Beyond', 16-38.

<sup>38</sup> Connolly 'Tocqueville, Territory, and Violence', 144.

<sup>39</sup> Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, 52.

and therefore would (de)politicize the territorialization needed for this equivalence. The practice of politics becomes geopoliticized when one theorizes around notions which evoke the territoriality of identity while occulting the contingency of this understanding of space. Thus, theorizing an agonistic model of democratic politics from the vantage points of ‘community’, ‘citizenship’ or ‘society’ involves an implicit soft form of geopolitical reasoning. The potential effect of geopoliticizing an agonistic democracy is to take geography as unpolitical and occult the antagonisms involved with circumscribing geographical space. Occulting the antagonisms produced by territorial space would be contrary to a respect for agonism since it would place territorial space outside of the realm of agonistic negotiations. In other words, placing space defined territorially as the privileged starting point risks placing territory and its corresponding political imaginary outside the realm of an agonistic model of democratic politics.

This is not to say that the practice of politics, even the practice of agonistic democratic politics, can exclude establishing boundaries. On the contrary, as I argued in Chapter Two, boundaries are constitutive of the political even within the context of agonistic democracy. However, when the privileged point of departure makes an equivalence between agonistic democracy and territory, there is a possibility of occulting those instances in which a deterritorialized form of an agonistic model of democratic politics may succeed in deepening and expanding the principles of democracy favoured by the project of Radical Democracy.

Such an instance may be found in the APEC/ NGO relation. While still functioning within the confines of territorial space and the practice of politics this space entails (i.e., the state as the locus of politics), what is being articulated by the NGO opposition to APEC appears to be a deepening and an expansion of the democratic principles by disaggregating elements in the

democratic imaginary (human rights, activism, freedom, equality, protest, and so on) from the territorial state form. This is what the symbolic order of democracy as one which is marked by the empty place of power entails. The markers of certainty, such as the equivalence between democracy and the practice of politics circumscribed by geographical space, become conditional. As was highlighted in the opening quote to this chapter, democracy is a model which, in a manner of speaking, ‘self-deconstructs’. In the case of the APEC/ NGO relation what is open to ‘self-deconstruction’ is the equivalence between the democratic imaginary and territory. In this respect, the suggestion that globalization is a *problem* for a model of agonistic democratic politics is conditioned by the vantage point from which the theorization of this model is postulated. If we take economic globalization as a political discourse which produces multiple antagonisms, then there is a potential for those antagonisms to give way to new articulations which deepen and expand the principles of democracy’s political imagination while concurrently operating in a deterritorialized manner. *Why, when, how* and upon *what* discursive principles such a deterritorialization of the democratic symbolic order could possibly occur is the subject of the following section.

***Elements for a deterritorialized  
model of agonistic democratic politics***

To deepen and expand the principles of democracy Laclau and Mouffe sought “to identify the *discursive conditions* for the emergence of a collective action, directed towards struggling against inequalities and challenging relations of subordination.”<sup>40</sup> It is in exploring this objective that we may find an entry point into *why, when, how*, and upon *what* discursive conditions

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<sup>40</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 153 (emphasis added).

collective action or social struggle against relations of subordination can occur and thereby might lead to a deterritorialization of democracy in a manner informed by an agonistic model of democratic politics.

Keeping in mind the understanding of the term ‘subject position’ we saw in Chapter Two, an agonistic model of democratic politics must offer an explanation of *why* ‘collective action’ against subordination would occur as well as *how* ‘collective action’ could be formulated from the standpoint of a non-essentialist and non-deterministic view of social struggle (that is, one which does not reproduce class essentialism and economic determinism as the explanation for social relations of subordination). In other words, the proposed view of social struggle must be formulated while remaining consistent with the position that there is no essential or deterministic grounding for collective action. It is for these reasons that Laclau and Mouffe speak of the ‘discursive conditions’ of social struggle rather than the historical or material conditions. Since the cause of social struggle can not be anchored to an essentialist or deterministic standpoint, there is no prior ground to social struggle outside of discursivity.

*Why* social struggle comes about directly flows from the way Laclau and Mouffe view identity formation which we explored briefly in Chapter Two. Recall that subjectivity seen through the notion of subject positions stems from the fact that within the democratic symbolic order, identity is no longer ordained from an elsewhere. Rather, it is constituted relationally. As such, identity is only knowable in terms of a subject position, i.e., positioned vis-à-vis others or in its relation to others. This positioning vis-à-vis others creates a web constituting a system of difference by which identity is constructed and known. This view of identity/ difference offered by Laclau and Mouffe follows quite closely that of Connolly’s in his understanding of social struggle.

For him, identity, personal as well as collective, can only be fixed through difference.

Such a thematization [of identity/ difference] does suggest that the fit among entrenched contingencies in a self is always imperfect and generally filled with tensions, that the fit between contingencies and social definition with a self is always imperfect, and that *the relational character of identity always raises the issue of how the self-constitution of identity is established through the constitution of differences.*<sup>41</sup>

This understanding of the relationality of identity is not in itself novel. Indeed, it reproduces to a certain extent the general problématique of identity/ difference which we have come to dominate an increasing body of literature in the various fields of social sciences.<sup>42</sup> However, as we will see below, what is novel is how this view of identity/ difference is seen as constitutive of the political (*le politique*), and how it forms the basis upon which a model of agonistic democratic politics envisions the possibility of collective action against relations of subordination.

Because identity can only be created through difference which is “essential to its being”,<sup>43</sup> identity formation is always potentially *political* insofar as that difference can be deployed as the terms for *exclusion*. For Connolly, the politics of identity arises when “established identities protect themselves through the conversion of difference into otherness”.<sup>44</sup> The space created for the creation of one identity formation can potentially involve the foreclosure of space for that which was marked as ‘other’ in the process of creating difference for identity. “Identity requires difference in

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<sup>41</sup> Connolly, *Identity/ Difference*, 163 (emphasis added).

<sup>42</sup> Among some interesting literature, see for instance *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation*, eds. Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (New York: Routledge, 1995), *Modernity and Identity*, eds. Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), *After Identity*, eds. Dan Danielson and Karen Engle (New York: Routledge, 1995), and *The Identity in Question*, ed. John Rajchman (New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>43</sup> Connolly, *Identity/ Difference*, 64.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.”<sup>45</sup> Rather than recognizing that identity is created through difference, the effect of othering is to consider the ‘other’ as a threat, one step away from needing to be punished.<sup>46</sup> The potential for ‘othering’ in Connolly’s view of the creation of identity/ difference has a similar connotation to that which produces antagonism in Laclau and Mouffe’s view of identity formation seen in Chapter Two. Within this context, *why* social struggle comes about stems from how the articulation of one identity is seen as impeding or subverting the completion of another.

For Laclau and Mouffe, the recognition by subordinated social agents that their identity is being negated transforms the *relation of subordination* into a *relation of oppression*.<sup>47</sup> A relation of subordination is one in which the subordination is not seen or ordered relationally (i.e., in terms of a relation of subordination to an ‘other’ which is impeding my identity), but is ordained from an elsewhere such as is the case of the serf’s subordination to the monarch. What legitimates the subordination of the serf’s relation to the monarch is mediated symbolically by something which appears to be outside of the field of social contestation. Here, the system of difference by which the identity and the relation of the serf/ monarch is created and marked by subordination would be closed since it is anchored to celestial ground. In effect, this determines beforehand the relation of the self (serf) to the other (monarch). Because the system of difference appears to be closed, the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>46</sup> The drive to punish the other stems from Connolly’s reading of Nietzsche from which he develops his notion of “existential resentment”. Existential resentment is the modern subject’s resentment of the finitude of life, and the unfairness of this finitude. For Connolly, a way of dealing with this unfair finitude is to seek solace in the entrenchment of one’s identity which entails identifying that which is different from one’s identity. The potential consequences is the creation of ‘evil others’ which are subsequently seen as infringing on the space for the self’s identity. Ibid., 158-197.

<sup>47</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 153-154.

symbolic order of the monarchical form does not provide for a contestation of subordination in the same manner as does the democratic symbolic order. It is only once the symbolic order of democracy empties the place of power that the multiple forms of subordination can potentially be seen as illegitimate since symbolically there no longer exists an unconditional exterior pole to which such relations could be anchored and maintained. As Anna-Marie Smith points out in her assessment of Laclau and Mouffe's work:

The subordinated agent only becomes radicalized when she finds a compelling political discourse that gives an effective account for her condition, provides her with the critical tools that she needs to join with others in constructing an alternative world, and shows her how the entire subordinating structure might be overthrown through collective action.<sup>48</sup>

That 'compelling political discourse' has historically been provided by the democratic imaginary. As such, for Laclau and Mouffe, it is only once social relations are ordered by the symbolic order of democracy that we may begin to see *relations of subordination as relations of oppression*. And it is only once relations of subordination are transformed into relations of oppression that social antagonism, and consequently collective action against subordination, becomes a feature of the symbolic ordering of social relations. As they state, "[o]ur thesis is that it is only from the moment when the democratic discourse becomes available to articulate the different forms of resistance to subordination that the conditions will exist to make possible the struggle against different types of inequality."<sup>49</sup> Because the democratic symbolic order leaves open the relation of the 'self' to the 'other' by leaving unfigured the place of power, there is no unconditional pole which can legitimize or give a figure to subordination. The discourse of such a closed system of difference by which

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<sup>48</sup> Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe*, 8.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

identity would be created can not anchor itself to an empty place. The same goes for relations of subordination.

In every case it is the impossibility of constituting relations of subordination as a closed system of differences- an impossibility implying the *externality* of the subordinator and subordinated identities to each other, rather than their absorption into the system through their positions- which lies at the base of the relation of oppression.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, within the symbolic order of democracy, a discourse that would seek to justify a relation of subordination can at best only be partially fixed (as would be the case in a ideological or hegemonic articulation of a relation of subordination). The system of difference through which a relation of subordination would be ‘permanently’ fixed can not be closed. From here, Laclau and Mouffe conclude that it is only because the symbolic ordering of social relations are not constituted within a closed system of difference that the subversion of one’s identity by a designated ‘other’ in a relation of subordination can potentially be transformed into a relation of oppression. To put it simply, I can only recognize my subordination as oppression, an oppression that would be felt as a subversion of my identity or a part of my identity, if the discourse that is oppressing me is unable to anchor itself to the place of power enabling it to be the discourse of a closed system of difference.

This does not mean however, that every relation of subordination within the democratic symbolic order will somehow automatically be felt as oppression leading to social struggle. In other words, *when*, more specifically, would subordination be felt as oppression? For Connolly, social struggle would stem from how, in his words, certain “entrenched formations” of identity are “culturally organized, interiorized, and naturalized”<sup>51</sup> in a manner which forces

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>51</sup> Connolly, *Identity/ Difference*, 176.

preconstituted definitions of what certain identities are to be. As Connolly illustrates:

The cultural parameters within which your sexuality is defined and organized chose you before you affirmed or resisted them. This can be true of one's sexual orientation, one's gender identification, one's race, one's job, one's age, one's political perspective, one's orientation to conflict, one's religious convictions, and so on.<sup>52</sup>

The entrenchment of one identity formation limits the space for another. Social struggle would stem more directly from when definitions of identity are entrenched through the practice of politics and are thereby seeking to become the social norm from which other identities are to be measured. For Laclau and Mouffe, on the other hand, two different social situations can account for the transformation of subordination into oppression. The first is when the “*displacement* of the democratic imaginary”<sup>53</sup> enables a rearticulation of a previous relation of subordination into a relation of oppression. Such is the case for the feminist movement which was able to displace the rights accorded to the subject position of ‘man’ towards the subject position of ‘women’. The logic of displacement at work here is one which could be expressed in very simple terms as ‘if them, why not us?’. The symbolic ordering of social relations that are part and parcel of the democratic adventure both enables this question and renders impossible an unconditional answer to it that would impede the displacement of rights. This is why Laclau and Mouffe see democracy as instituting the “*equivalential-egalitarian logic*”.<sup>54</sup> A chain of equivalence is made with the privileged status of others which are construed not as privileged but as equals. In essence, to make this equivalence is to access the democratic symbolic order.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>53</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 159 (emphasis added).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 167.

The second situation in which a relation of subordination would produce social struggle comes about “when acquired rights are being called into question, or when social relations which had not been constructed under the form of subordination begin to be so under the impact of certain social transformations.”<sup>55</sup> As Michael Brown points out, the oppression felt by people whose identity is marked with AIDS/ HIV would correspond to this last example in which a relatively recent social transformation has led to new forms of subordination which can be felt as oppression.<sup>56</sup> The rights of those whose identity is marked by AIDS/ HIV are being called into question whereas they had not been prior to contracting the virus. One of the more significant recent social transformations of relevance for this thesis is the one subsumed under the heading of globalization. Indeed, among the social transformations of our century, globalization is a particularly interesting case study for a model of agonistic democratic politics to the extent that it contributes to increasing both instances of possible social struggle identified by Laclau and Mouffe. That is, not only does globalization open the possibility to the displacement of the democratic imaginary towards old forms of subordination (say child labour rights on a world scale), but it also produces new forms of subordination (illegal immigrants) which can be felt as oppression. A third manner by which

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>56</sup> Brown suggests however, that the oppression did not express itself in an antagonistic form leading to organized social struggle. Rather, in his analysis of the display of the Canadian NAMES project Memorial Quilt, Brown argues that while antagonism is present at a broader social scale, the political space opened by the AIDS quilt was primarily articulated in terms of grief and mourning. He writes: “[a]s a space of citizenship, the event allowed a group of strangers to come together to practise radical democratic citizenship. Their orientation at the display itself, however, was hardly antagonistic. As a space of grief and mourning, the Quilt enabled a politics that did not hinge on a friend-or-enemy duality.” See Brown, ‘The Cultural Saliency of Radical Democracy: Moments from the AIDS Quilt’, 42. Brown does offer an interesting critique of Radical Democracy’s understanding of the political as necessarily antagonism. However, that antagonism was not expressed at the AIDS quilt display does not exclude antagonism entirely from the social transformation that accompanies AIDS. In my mind, we must distinguish between one instance of a social transformation and the social transformation itself.

globalization may be contributing to increasing instances of social struggle is through its effect of increasing the contingency of identity. As Connolly has argued, globalization increases the precariousness of identity formation by contributing to multiplying possible forms of identity and thereby opening the possibility of revealing their contingency to other identities. Globalization also increases contingency by increasing the porosity of identity, by revealing its multiple layers. This, for Connolly, has the corresponding effect of increasing the impulse to create unity and entrenchment of identity which leads to increased instances of social antagonism.<sup>57</sup> In a sense, we can read this as saying that globalization increases the effect of the symbolic ordering of social relations which accompany democracy by increasing the unfigurability of the social and the disincorporation of the social body. With globalization, now more than before, no One can give figure to the social, and even the elements of political imagination (e.g., the nation) which succeeded in doing so are increasingly placed in a unstable position because of their increased porosity.<sup>58</sup>

From the standpoint of the epistemological commitment of a metaphysics of absence, the above is the explanation offered as to *why* and *when* social struggle comes about. Rather than stemming from an essentialist or deterministic ground prior to discursivity, the explanation of social struggle offered here occurs at the level of the symbolic ordering of social relations which, as seen in Chapter Two, can only be known discursively. In other words, social struggle does not stem from an essentialized notion of forces of production such as is the case in orthodox Marxism. Nor does

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<sup>57</sup> Connolly, *Identity/ Difference*, 172.

<sup>58</sup> The relation between globalization and the nation is worked out quite nicely in William E. Connolly, 'Pluralism, Multiculturalism and the Nation-State: Rethinking the Connections' *Political Ideologies*, 1, no. 1 (1996), 53-73.

social struggle stem from a pre-discursive understanding of identity as is the case for certain forms of feminism.<sup>59</sup> Rather, it stems from how identity/ difference is created within the symbolic ordering of social relations enabled by the democratic adventure which can be accentuated by the processes subsumed under globalization.

With respect to Laclau and Mouffe, identifying the *why* and the *when* of social struggle is the first step in their objective of locating ‘the *discursive conditions* for the emergence of a collective action’. Now comes the *how* of collective action. In other words, how do we go from the impossibility of bringing a final legitimation to relations of subordination to identifying the “discursive conditions for the emergence of a collective action, directed towards struggling against inequalities and challenging relations of subordination”<sup>60</sup>? This can be seen as the central question for agonistic democratic politics since it is the move from identifying the *political* dimension of identity formation to the *agonistic politics* of collective action. Or said otherwise, it is the move from a ‘poststructuralist’ understanding of identity to a post-marxist view of collective action. Thus, in a sense the first step merely consisted of taking the Lefortian explanation of democratic adventure and explaining how identity and its relation to social struggle would be conditioned by this symbolic order. In other words, up until this point we have only seen how social struggle is related to identity when the latter is seen from the epistemological standpoint of a metaphysics of absence. Identity is overdetermined or constituted by the ‘other’, and thus always opened to antagonistic social

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<sup>59</sup> See Mouffe’s critique of the forms of feminism which seek to identify the essential kernel of feminist identity. Chantal Mouffe, ‘Feminism, Citizenship, and Radical Democratic Politics’, in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, eds. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 369-384, reprinted in Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, 74-89.

<sup>60</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 153.

relations leading to possible social struggle when the ‘other’ seems to be impeding the ‘self’ completion or when difference is created as ‘other’. However, there is nothing saying that social struggle will happen, or that it will necessarily revolve around the principles of the democratic political imaginary that are favoured by an agonistic model of democratic politics, i.e., equality and liberty. When working from a Lefortian understanding of the democratic adventure, there is no necessary relation between the democratic symbolic order and the principles of the democratic imaginary, and Laclau and Mouffe as well as Connolly are well aware of this.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, the fact that the totalitarian impulse also accompanies the symbolic order inaugurated by the democratic adventure excludes the possibility of establishing a *sine qua non* relation between the democratic principles and the symbolic ordering of social relations inaugurated by the democratic adventure.<sup>62</sup> The symbolic form can almost as easily provide the terrain for the radical right as it can for the peace movement. Furthermore, the principles of the democratic imaginary are themselves potentially the site of antagonism insofar as the meaning of equality and liberty always remain overdetermined and can not be fixed. As such, these principles can be deployed by discourses which

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<sup>61</sup> For Laclau and Mouffe the reader can refer to the quote on the following page. In regards to Connolly, he writes: “It is just that the *ambiguity* of democracy adds the possibility of engaging the contingency of existence to other pressures already extant, whereas other social forms either suppress this possibility altogether or exclude it from a robust role in political life. More than other social forms, democracy accentuates exposure to contingency and increases the likelihood that the affirmation of difference in identity will find expression in public life. *This intensification of the experience of the constructed, relational character of identity/ difference constitutes both a virtue and a danger of democracy.*” Connolly, *Identity/ Difference*, 193 (last emphasis added).

<sup>62</sup> Lefort writes: “Fascism and communism, let me repeat, fall within the domain of a meta-sociological interpretation. Any attempt to analyse them as empirical, socio-historical formations will be limited, however rich the documentation may be, for such an attempt will fail to see that it is the question of the existence of the social, of the historical as such, which is brought into play in totalitarianism. The latter is neither an accidental deviation in the development of industrial capitalism, nor an aberration for which psychology can provide the key; it realizes a potentiality which is implicit in the social from the moment that its institution can no longer be conceived or contained by a discourse that seeks its origin elsewhere, in another place.” Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society. Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 219-220.

struggle against subordination as well as ones which (re)institute it. As Laclau and Mouffe note, Reaganism and Thatcherism also deployed the principles of the democratic imaginary but in a manner which tended to (re)inforce older forms of relations of subordination which accompanied their brand of neo-conservatism. Thus, the authors are aware that the *why* and *when* of social struggle reviewed above does not necessarily produce automatically ‘collective action directed towards struggling against inequalities and challenging relations of subordination’, something which is not always clear with Connolly. Furthermore, when it does produce collective action there is no predetermined direction for this action. It may lead to struggle against subordination in a direction that coincides with the principles of the democratic imaginary favoured by Laclau and Mouffe or it may not. Collective action in a given direction must be constructed in that direction. As the authors note:

[I]t is necessary [...] to make clear that the democratic revolution is simply the terrain upon which there operates a logic of displacement supported by an egalitarian imaginary, but that it does not predetermine the *direction* in which this imaginary will operate. [...] The reason why it is not thus, and why no teleology can account for social articulations, is that the discursive compass of the democratic revolution open the way for political logics as diverse as right-wing populism and totalitarianism on the one hand, and a radical democracy on the other. Therefore, if we wish to construct the hegemonic articulations which allow us to set ourselves in the direction of the latter, we must understand in all their radical heterogeneity the range of possibilities which are opened in the terrain of democracy itself.<sup>63</sup>

As indicated in the above quote, the only thing that the democratic symbolic order provides is the terrain or the proper symbolic ordering of social relations, the proper ‘*mise en forme*’ of the social, in which there is the potential for relations of subordination to be felt as relations of oppression and thereby be transformed into collective action against those relations of subordination. But there is

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<sup>63</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 168.

nothing that predetermines the direction that will be taken by collective action. “Every antagonism, left free to itself, is a floating signifier, a ‘wild’ antagonism which does not predetermine the form in which it can be articulated to other elements in a social formation.”<sup>64</sup> The direction of the articulation involved in establishing a chain of equivalence through which collective action would struggle against relations of oppression remains open. As Žižek highlights through the subject position of ecology, the articulation is always subject to multiple possibilities.

Ecology, for example, is never ‘ecology as such’, it is always enchained in a specific series of equivalences: it can be conservative (advocating the return to balanced rural communities and traditional ways of life), etatist (only a strong state regulation can save us from the impending catastrophe), socialist (the ultimate cause of ecological problems resides in the capitalist profit-orientated exploitation of natural resources), liberal-capitalist (one should include the damage to the environment in the price of the product, and thus leave the market to regulate the ecological balance), feminist (the exploitation of nature follows from the male attitude of domination), anarchic self-managerial (humanity can survive only if it reorganizes itself into small self-reliant communities that live in balance with nature), and so on [one could add ecoterrorist]. The point, of course, is that none of these enchainments is in itself ‘true’ inscribed in the very nature of the ecological problematic [...].<sup>65</sup>

Here, ecology functions as an empty ‘floating signifier’ since its meaning can not be fixed. There is no ‘ecology as such’. Whether or not the collective action that is organized around ecology is articulated in terms of the democratic political imaginary by establishing a chain of equivalence with other social struggles that also deploy that imaginary remains open. As such, the central question of *how* collective action is to be formulated still remains.

The answer provided by Radical Democracy’s political project follows the displacement of the equivalential-egalitarian logic briefly mentioned earlier. What is provided by

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>65</sup> Slavoj Žižek, ‘Introduction: The Spectre of Ideology’ in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1994), 12.

the symbolic order of democracy is precisely the terrain in which such a logic can be used, (or inversely can not be foreclosed). As Michèle Barrett notes, for Laclau and Mouffe “the democratic revolution brings about a logic of equivalence, a logic of the comparison of subjects that are, essentially, construed as equals, through its new discourse of ‘rights’, ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’.”<sup>66</sup> The conceptualisation of this logic again follows from their understanding of identity. We saw that identity was constituted relationally. We also saw how social struggle stems from the negation of identity or the entrenchment of certain identities which leads to the foreclosure of space for others. It is within this understanding of identity that lies the potential to create a chain of equivalence between different subject positions. In other words, my struggle for equality and liberty can not be articulated from a self enclosed position. I can only articulate that struggle *vis-à-vis* ‘others’. I need ‘others’ to be able to articulate my own struggle in the same manner that I need ‘others’ to create a system of difference to construct my own subject position. For example, what enables a displacement of rights towards women is that the struggle for those rights from the subject position of ‘women’ could be articulated in terms of an equivalence to the subject position that was already accorded those rights, i.e., the subject position ‘man’. Evidently, drawing this equivalence necessarily entails the rearticulation of the subject position of ‘man’. But it also means that the equivalential- egalitarian logic through which democratic rights are acquired needs the ‘other’ in order to displace the democratic imaginary towards other subject positions. At this point it is important to note that for an agonistic model of democratic politics, social struggle against inequality is not aimed at the physical being which is seen as negating the self. Rather, struggle is

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<sup>66</sup> Michèle Barrett, ‘Ideology, Politics, Hegemony: From Gramsci to Laclau and Mouffe’ in *Mapping Ideology*, 254.

understood to be directed towards the discursive articulation of the subject position(s) which is seen as impeding the extension of liberty and equality.<sup>67</sup>

Because Laclau and Mouffe eschew the possibility of social struggle stemming from the position of a self enclosed agency or a pre-discursive ground, the only way collective action can be organized is through their understanding of the relational dimension of identity. As such, the only way to formulate collective action against relations of subordination is to do it relationally. This is the basis of the equivalential-egalitarian logic by means of which the democratic principles can be deepened and expanded. So far, we have seen *why*, *when*, and *how* social struggle against relations of subordination can lead to collective action. What remains is the ‘*what*’, i.e., *what* is the discursive basis upon which such collective action could be formulated?

As mentioned earlier, the project of an agonistic model of democratic politics is to deepen and expand the primary principles of the democratic imaginary: liberty and equality. These principles are seen as the primary “symbolic resources” of democracy<sup>68</sup> and function as ‘nodal points’ for a democratic discourse struggling against relations of oppression. And yet importantly their meaning can not be fixed. They can not function as the unconditional foundation for agonistic democracy. To believe otherwise would be to purport to have eliminated all antagonism from the meaning of the principles of the democratic imagination, that the latter are not overdetermined, and

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<sup>67</sup> As Mouffe notes: “What is necessary to stress, however, is that the use of the friend/ enemy criterion for a project of radical and plural democracy requires conceiving democratic politics as taking place in a multiplicity of political spaces always linked to specific ‘subject positions’ which can never be conflated with social agents. The struggle against racism or sexism, for instance, consists in destroying racist or sexist subject positions and the institutions in which these are embodied, not concrete human beings. The elimination of the ‘enemy’ should not be understood as physical elimination.” Chantal Mouffe, ‘Radical Democracy or Liberal Democracy?’ in *Radical Democracy: Identity, Citizenship, and the State*, ed. David Trend (New York: Routledge, 1996), 25.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

are unpolitical. As Mouffe states:

[...] there will always be competing interpretations of the principles of liberty and equality, the type of social relations in which they should apply, and their mode of institutionalization. The common good can never be actualized. It must remain a *foyer virtuel* to which we must constantly refer, but which cannot have a real existence. It is the very characteristic of modern democracy to impede such a final fixation of the social order and to preclude the possibility for a discourse to establish a definite suture.<sup>69</sup>

Liberty and equality must remain as “vanishing points”,<sup>70</sup> or as “empty or floating signifiers”<sup>71</sup> always open to interpretation. This is not to say that when these terms are used they do not invoke certain meanings. On the contrary, they are replete with meaning. But it is precisely because they are so full that one specific understanding can not be entirely fixed. The impossibility of fixing their meaning is what enables them to inform a wide variety of discourses which seeks to deepen and expand the principles of the democratic imaginary. Since their meaning remains floating, then they remain open to being deepened and expanded. As Laclau points out, it is because the term democracy and its imaginary of liberty and equality is so difficult, even impossible, to define that it has become the rallying cry of a multitude of social movements.

In this process, those symbols tend to lose all specific content and to become empty or floating signifiers. In order to be the overdetermining element of a large chain of social demands, they have to dispossess themselves of any determinate meaning. Let us just think of the imprecision that the term *democracy* had for the demonstrators at Tiananmen Square. Because of this imprecision, it could operate as the surface of inscription for practically any social demand.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Chantal Mouffe, ‘Liberalism and Modern Democracy’, in *Democracy and Possessive Individualism*, ed. Joseph H. Carens (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 188.

<sup>70</sup> Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, 85.

<sup>71</sup> Ernesto Laclau, ‘The Signifiers of Democracy’ in *Democracy and Possessive Individualism*, ed. Joseph H. Carens (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 231.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

This is a central point for the objective of this chapter. It is this unfixity in meaning that enables the symbolic resources of democracy to become the nodal points for collective action which exceeds the social space circumscribed by democratic regimes. Democracy and the principles of its political imaginary of liberty and equality understood as vanishing points constitute the discursive basis for an understanding of how social struggle can lead to an articulation of a deterritorialized form of democracy. If the symbolic resources of democracy were not floating signifiers the NGO opposition to APEC could not occur. Opposing something which is outside of the boundaries of current democratic institutions would not be possible if the meaning of these terms was fixed to a territorial understanding of democracy. It is only once liberty and equality are understood as floating signifiers that the possibility is open to disaggregating “elements in the democratic political imaginary” from their territorial boundaries.<sup>73</sup> As such, it is this indeterminacy at the level of meaning which provides the ‘discursive conditions’ for collective action to formulate a discourse that would seek to deepen and expand the principles of the democratic imaginary which involve exceeding territorial space. In responding to the antagonism in APEC’s discourse on the social, the NGOs, while still functioning in the confines of territorial space, open the possibility of drawing a chain of equivalence between the experience of democracy territorialized and democracy deterritorialized. It is the empty character of the democratic imaginary of liberty and equality which provides the basis for this equivalence. And it is the symbolic order of democracy marked by the empty place of power which makes this emptiness the character of the democratic imagination.

That having been said, based on what has been explored both in this chapter as well

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<sup>73</sup> Connolly, ‘Democracy and Territoriality’, 478.

as Chapter Two, one can formulate an understanding of what liberty and equality *should* mean for an agonistic model of democratic politics. That meaning would follow closely what Mouffe terms “agonistic pluralism”,<sup>74</sup> or what Connolly calls “agonistic respect”.<sup>75</sup> Both agonistic pluralism and agonistic respect start from the vantage point of the contingency of identity brought on by the disincorporation of the social body which is constitutive of the democratic adventure, and both of these directions move towards a reinforcement of the pluralism accompanying the symbolic ordering of social relations marked by the empty place of power. However, this is not to be understood as merely advocating a pluralism for pluralism’s sake, which Mouffe sees as being the case for some forms of postmodernism.<sup>76</sup> Rather, pluralism, as Connolly notes, is understood as a *condition of possibility* for identity formation within the symbolic order of democracy since, as we have seen, it is through the ‘other’ that identity is made possible. The necessary constitutive outside of identity creation informs the need to recognize pluralism as a generative principle. Within this context, the pluralism that is being advocated recognizes the potential antagonistic dimension of pluralism and seeks to transform that antagonism towards a democratic form without eliminating it, hence the usage of *agonism* (the friend/ adversary relation). It seeks to account for the constitutive pluralism which accompanies the deepening of the relationality of identity/ difference inaugurated with the democratic symbolic order and reinforced by late modernity. It recognizes both that

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<sup>74</sup> Chantal Mouffe, ‘Pour un pluralisme agonistique’, *La revue MAUSS*, no. 2 (1993), 98-105.

<sup>75</sup> Connolly, *Identity/Difference*. Connolly also uses the category of ‘democratic ethos’ which informs his notion of agonistic respect. With democratic ethos, Connolly points towards a similar direction as Mouffe does with her notion of vanishing point. Evoking the idea of spirit, a view of democracy as an ethos argues that any meaning which one assigns to democracy must remain contingent recognizing the constitutive pluralism of the democratic symbolic order. See Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization*.

<sup>76</sup> Chantal Mouffe, ‘Democratic Politics and the Question of Identity’, in *The Identity Question*, ed. John Rajchman (New York: Routledge, 1995), 39.

identity/ difference is relational and that consequently identity construction is antagonistic. It acknowledges that the political is constitutive of identity/ difference. Agonistic respect and agonistic pluralism allows for this, allows for the *political (le politique)*. It seeks to negotiate democratically the political paradox of identity,<sup>77</sup> a paradox which stems for the fact that at the same moment that identity formation requires the ‘other’ for its own being, it occults, eclipses or obscures the space for the other’s being in the construction of its own identity. Thus, there is a clear rejection of the postmodern motto that calls for a ‘celebration of difference’ since this form of pluralism does not “distinguish between differences that exist but should not exist and differences that do not exist but should exist.”<sup>78</sup> This form of ‘celebration of difference’ does not adequately recognize the political dimension of identity/ difference, i.e., its antagonistic basis. As Connolly would argue it does not recognize difference constructed as ‘otherness’. Agonistic pluralism and agonistic respect therefore entails moving liberty and equality beyond the rights of the individual towards a recognition of the ‘other’ and of Alterity.

Such a pluralism is anchored in the recognition of the multiplicity within oneself and of the contradictory positions that this multiplicity entails. Its acceptance of the other does not merely consist of tolerating differences, but in positively celebrating them because it acknowledges that, without alterity and otherness, no identity could ever assert itself. It is also a pluralism that valorizes diversity and dissensus, recognizing in them the very condition of possibility, of a striving democratic life.<sup>79</sup>

Again, we are brought to the idea that democracy entails more than just an institutional form and a system of government. Democracy involves the question of Alterity of social being and answers

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<sup>77</sup> I refer here to the subtitle to Connolly’s, *Identity/ Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*.

<sup>78</sup> Mouffe, ‘Democratic Politics and the Question of Identity’, 39.

<sup>79</sup> Mouffe, ‘Post-Marxism: Democracy and Identity’, 265.

this question by leaving open the *constitutive* relation with *otherness*.

### ***Conclusion***

In view of proposing a reading of the APEC/ NGO relation, this chapter had to accomplish a number of steps in order to fulfil its objective of offering an understanding of a non-territorialized form of democracy consistent with the epistemological grounding of the thesis. The body of work which I reunited with my model of agonistic democratic politics was to offer the theoretical terrain to achieve this objective. In order to use this body of work there was a need to explain how that which is normally seen as impeding agonistic democracy, i.e., globalization, may on the contrary offer a political discourse which, through the antagonisms it produces, is able to opened the possibility of deterritorializing democracy. This possibility of deterritorializing democracy could be seen as moving towards the project of agonistic democratic politics insofar as it represented a deepening and an expansion of the political imaginary of democracy. A reading of *why*, *when*, *how*, and upon *what* discursive basis collective action against relations of subordination and inequality was the subsequent focus of this chapter. All of these elements revolved around the political foundation of identity/ difference and the political consequences it engenders. Within this context, *why* social struggle comes about is a result of the antagonisms produced in the (re)creation of identity/ difference; *when* social struggle occurs is attributed to those instances when relations of subordination are felt as oppression; *how* collection action is to be organized within the '*mise en forme*' of the absence of prediscursive foundation is to be found in the equivalential- egalitarian logic; and *what* discursive basis would allow for collective action to deepen and expand the democratic political imaginary beyond territory was located in how the principles of this imaginary

could function as empty or floating signifiers along agonistic lines. The theoretical position explored in this chapter, combined with the broader theoretical vantage point of Chapter Two will form the basis upon which the subsequent chapter will read the NGO opposition to APEC. More specifically, Chapter Five will seek to examine whether the discourse of the NGOs as it is articulated at the parallel People's summits actually deploys the principles of democracy's political imaginary in a manner which is both consistent with an agonistic model of democratic politics, and which exceeds territory.

## Chapter Five

### Exploring the Possibility of Deterritorializing Democracy: the Parallel NGO forums on APEC

We would strongly advocate that within APEC there is a debate on central values to be had. This is not a debate about economics. It is a debate about values. And it is a debate about the interdependency of economics, social, cultural, political, and civil rights.<sup>1</sup>

This is about a contest of ideas and unfortunately it often seems to us that it's the ideas the government is more scared about than any real threat to the conference.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Introduction*

This chapter offers a reading of the discourse of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as it is articulated at the parallel forums which have opposed APEC. Part of the argument of this thesis is that the NGOs are responding to the antagonism contained in APEC's discourse. That antagonism stems from the manner in which APEC's discourse also contains a discourse on the social which occults difference. This occultation of difference does not allow the articulation of the multitude of subject positions voiced by NGOs at the parallel forums. As was argued in Chapter One, the NGOs are opposing APEC for this reason. Thus, the opposition stems not from what APEC does but from what it represents, what it figures. In responding to this antagonism, I further argued that the 'People's Summits' open the possibility for a deterritorialization of democracy. As was proposed in Chapter One, deterritorializing democracy implies disaggregating

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<sup>1</sup> Ross Daniels, Chief Executive, Amnesty International. Excerpt of speech given at the 1995 NGO Forum on APEC in Kyoto Japan. Reproduced in *AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, 26, no. 4 (1996), 30.

<sup>2</sup> Aziz Choudry of the Aotearoa/New Zealand APEC Monitoring Group. Quoted in Warren Gamble, 'Anti-APEC Talks Before Summit', *New Zealand Herald* (August 6, 1999).

territoriality from the series of equivalences which are generally invoked in the democratic imaginary and which have served to maintain the interstate world and interstate organizations at bay from the realm of the democratic. What remains to be seen however, is whether the NGO discourse actually articulates its opposition in a way which allows for a deterritorialization of democracy in an *agonistic* form. As it was examined in Chapter Four, there is nothing which can predetermine the discursive direction of a response to an antagonism. The antagonism itself is an ‘empty or free floating’ signifier open to a variety of articulations. As such, the deterritorialization of democracy depends on the manner in which the NGOs articulate their discourse, and more specifically on the series of equivalences that are drawn in the discourse. Despite the fact that it is the democratic symbolic ordering of social relations which enables the opposition to APEC to occur, there is nothing which can predetermine whether that contestation will deterritorialize the democratic imaginary, or that it will be consistent with a model of agonistic democratic politics. The *possibility is there*, but it remains merely a *possibility* so long as the opposition does not ‘operationalize’ a deterritorialized democracy through its discourse.

Through a detailed reading of the final ‘Declaration’ of each parallel forum, this chapter will explore the *practice of politics* as well as the *political* of the ‘People’s Summits’ on APEC in an effort to examine those instances which push towards a deterritorialization of the democratic imaginary. It is important to note that these statements are by no means a comprehensive rendering of the entire NGO opposition to APEC. When one considers that for some of these forums several hundred organizations were involved, creating such a picture of the NGO discourse would indeed be a task beyond the breadth of this chapter. What these final statements do offer us however, is an illustrative (rather than comprehensive) glimpse into the oppositional discourse of

NGOs, the alternative world they envision, as well as the antagonism which marks the APEC/ NGO relation. Even though these statements are often very short (no more than a few pages) and often lack specific details, they seek to capture and give voice to the basis of NGO opposition to APEC as it stands at the parallel forums. They can be read as an attempt to essentialize meaning and arrest a view of the world meant to reflect the one championed by NGOs, a view that is seen as being obscured by APEC. They also act as ‘founding documents’ which operate at the level of the practice of politics and at the level of the political by giving us the image of the alternative world the NGOs promote, and the political foundation upon which this world is created. The objective of this chapter is to read these statements and declarations as operating both at the level of the practice of politics and at the level of the political. At the level of the practice of politics, what these documents offer is a challenge to the discourse on the social carried by APEC. They propose an alternative world picture, an alternative discourse on the social where the subject positions occulted by APEC would appear to be fully realized. At the level of the political, they occasionally offer openings which can be seen as destabilizing and challenging the territorialization of democracy which accompanies the modern political imagination. In this sense, they challenge, destabilize and render contingent what appears to be fixed determined structures, i.e., the markers of certainty of democracy and interstate relations.

Before such a reading can occur however, we need to establish what is our understanding of ‘NGOs’. To do so, this chapter will begin by exploring the category of ‘new social movements’ to which I associate NGOs. As we will see, within international theory (IT), new social movements are not frequently viewed in a manner which coincides with the theoretical vantage point of this thesis. Most often, they are seen as elements of an emerging global civil society capable

of being a substitute for a forgotten revolutionary social class. New social movements are viewed as transformative social agents fighting for ‘social justice’ within and without the state.<sup>3</sup> This often leads to essentializing NGOs as inherently progressive and engaged in some form of ‘democratic struggle’ thereby suggesting that what we are witnessing is emerging new forms of ‘post-modern’ democracy.<sup>4</sup> Abandoning essentialism requires us to review the category of new social movements. As such, my objective is to distinguish between those authors which, in addressing new social movements, are sensitive to the problématique of foundation and the political from those who are not. Framed by this problématique, new social movements are to be viewed in terms of their political potential (in the sense of *le politique*) located at the level of the discursive possibilities they open. Thus, the practice of politics (in the sense of *la politique*) of that NGOs opposing APEC seek to articulate through their discourse has consequences for the possibility of disaggregating territory from the democratic imaginary.

### ***The category of new social movements in IT***

The advent of the category of new social movements is most often associated with

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<sup>3</sup> See for instance Richard Devetak and Richard Higgott, ‘Justice Unbound? Globalization, States and the Transformation of the Social Bond’, *International Affairs*, 75, no. 3 (1999), 483–498. Devetak and Higgott problematize this understanding of new social movements.

<sup>4</sup> On an interesting critic of this view of new social movements from a Lefortian standpoint, see J. Yvon Thériault, ‘Mouvements sociaux et nouvelle culture politique’, *Politique*, 12 (1987), 5-36. Thériault argues that despite claims to novelty, the current theorization of social movements (which he divides into two incommensurable camps: ‘*l’individualisme démocratique*’ and ‘*l’inscription sociale*’) does not break with the ‘insurmountable’ tension inaugurated with Modernity. Through his reading of Lefort (and others), Thériault contends that new social movements express the tension between the disincorporation and reincorporation of the social body which accompanies the democratic adventure, a tension which is reflected in two opposing views of the social: “*le projet politique libéral et le projet socialiste*”. Those who view social movements as advocating the rights of the individual and those who view social movements as forces of collective struggle reproduce this tension. A more recent analysis of the tension between democratic individualism and solidarity is presented in J. Yvon Thériault, ‘Pour un pluralisme démocratique’, *Politique et sociétés*, 16, no. 3 (1997), 9-27.

the social transformations that occurred in various parts of the world during the 1960s and 1970s with the anti-Vietnam war protests and related peace movements of 1968 standing out as climatic. Generally, the contention is that during this period, the post-war consensus on social and political issues in most Western societies no longer held, and the conventional state sponsored institutions of the practice of politics associated with this consensus were increasingly being contested in various forms. As Claus Offe put it,

The conflicts and contradictions of advanced industrial society can no longer be resolved in meaningful and promising ways through etatism, political regulation, and the proliferating inclusion of ever more claims and issues on the agenda of bureaucratic authorities.<sup>5</sup>

Those associated with this period of contestation, the peace movement, the feminist movement, civil or human rights groups, gay and lesbian groups, anti-war groups and so on, were seen as forming the new social movements. What made them particularly 'new' and distinguished them from the social movements of the past was that the issues they represented were not seen as being adequately dealt with by institutionalized politics. Their goal therefore, was not necessarily to capture state power as was the case with the socialist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Furthermore, they were not seen as primarily class based since their struggle and their demands were not framed in the 'traditional' class discourse. Nor was the exploitation enabled by capitalist social relations of production the primary dynamic of their counterdiscourse, although this was not always excluded. Rather, the struggle often revolved around rights, equality, freedom, or justice. That along with the fact that they represented an articulation of 'difference' (to the extent that their struggle often sought to create a space for difference such as the gay and lesbian

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<sup>5</sup> Claus Offe, 'New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics', *Social Research*, 52, no. 4 (1985), 819.

movements) is what labelled them as particularly 'new' social movements.

With the increasing difficulty of maintaining 'class' as the agent of social change, many observer of Marxist or socialist leanings identified new social movements as a potential replacement of the 'historical agent of change' previously constituted by the proletariat. New social movements and their potential transformative political force with consequences exceeding state boundaries made them important social forces of global change.<sup>6</sup> On a world scale, the Rio and Kyoto Summits on global environmental issues, and more recently the global campaign to ban anti-personnel land mines are instances in which global civil society and its representative NGOs have been seen as instrumental in fostering global social and political change. The fact that new social movements are now gaining attention in the discipline of international relations (IR) and global political economy (GPE) generally stems from their increased influence in the process of decision making on a world scale. However, as has been noted by Mustapha Kamal Pasha and David Blaney, those authors who have viewed social movements in this light have tended to assume, in rather unproblematic terms, that the latter are progressive democratizing forces, constituents of a civil society of global dimension engaged in positive social transformations.<sup>7</sup> Similar to the suspicion

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<sup>6</sup> Much of the way Richard Falk has articulated the 'World Order Models Project' (WOMP), has placed the category of news social movements in this light. See Richard Falk, 'From Geopolitics to Geogovernance: WOMP and Contemporary Political Discourse', *Alternatives*, 19, no. 1 (1994), 145-154, Richard Falk, 'Democratizing, Internationalising, and Globalising: A Collage of Blurred Images', *Third World Quarterly*, 13, no. 4 (1993), 627-640, and Richard Falk, 'The Global Promise of Social Movements: Explorations at the Edge of Time', *Alternatives*, 12, no. 1 (1987), 173-196. On a similar view point but inspired more specifically by the inequalities produced by global capitalism, see in particular James H. Mittelman, 'The Dynamics of Globalization' in *Globalization: Critical Reflections*, ed. James H. Mittelman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 1-19, and Leo Panitch and Ralph Miliband, 'The New World Order and the Socialist Agenda', in *The Socialist Register 1992*, eds. Ralph Miliband and Leo Panitch (London: The Merlin Press, 1992), 1-25.

<sup>7</sup> The authors write that for the most prevalent view of social movements in IT, "the state's historic role is increasingly subordinated to a process of global governance, within which the possibility of democratic accountability is secured by the activism of a rather inclusive array of social groups and organizations. Thus, GCS [global civil society] is touted as the antidote for the anarchical structure, inequality, and exclusion of the state system." Mustapha Kamal Pasha

voiced by Pasha and Blaney, my contention is that the literature in IT which has addressed the category of new social movements in this manner fails to apprehend their *political* (in the sense of *le politique*) significance by seeing social movements merely at the level of politics. More often than not, new social movements in IT are seen as merely new players in global politics, and thus function within the same parameters of political action as other players. They tend to be viewed through an understanding of politics which see the latter as the outcome of a process of competing interests seeking to influence decision makers. The fact that new social movements are now gaining attention therefore stems from their increased influence in the process of decision making on a world scale. Following Pasha and Blaney, this section takes the work of Ronnie Lipschutz and Martin Shaw as being notable examples of this common view of social movements in IT.<sup>8</sup> The chapter then explores the work of Warren Magnusson, R.B.J. Walker, and Cecelia Lynch in an effort to distinguish the view of new social movements that will be used in this thesis. Each of these authors provide important points of reflection but which need to be placed in relation to my theoretical vantage point as it was presented in Chapters Two and Four.

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and David L. Blaney, 'Elusive Paradise: The Promise and Peril of Global Civil Society', *Alternatives*, 23, no. 3 (1998), 418. Pasha and Blaney's main argument is that the predominant theorization revolving around the concept of global civil society has failed to apprehend its relationship to the advent of "global capitalism" thereby purifying such theorization "of the unequal and alienated relationships of capitalism." See *Ibid.*, 419. Among other authors who have criticized the concept of global civil society in Marxist terms see notably André Drainville, 'International Political Economy in the Age of Open Marxism', *Review of International Political Economy*, 1, no. 1 (1994), 105-132. Drainville takes particular aim at the body of work increasingly known as 'Gramscian transnational historical materialism'. According to Drainville, those who have theorized social resistance to global capitalism within this school of thought tend to locate "the task of building counter-hegemony" at the level of social contradictions and dislocations created by the "world economy". Drainville argues that this fails to apprehend the fact that "[...] socialist internationalism is the project of social forces that have no political unity in the world economy and cannot be simply defined, and applied, however unequally. It has to be a continuous creation, defined inductively from the ground up, from struggles and events as they present themselves." *Ibid.*, 124. As such, Drainville's opposition stems from the contention that the global civil society from where a counter-hegemonic project is to be launched only exists at the level of abstraction and not in real practice.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, fn. 11, 440.

In his work on ‘global civil society’ Ronnie Lipschutz contends that there are three factors which can explain the advent of networks of social relations making up a civil society of global proportion.<sup>9</sup> The first of these factors is how the increasing globalization of a ‘capitalist consumer culture’ has created a certain global commonality. Both the resistance to, and the acceptance of, the modes of production of neo-liberalism have “giv[en] life and power to global civil society”.<sup>10</sup> This globalizing tendency at the level of production has contributed to “the ‘fading away’ of anarchy among states”.<sup>11</sup> Among other things, the resulting “growing ‘density’ of the global system”<sup>12</sup> (i.e., rising interdependence among states) is not conducive to the traditional national security problématique where it was assumed that the unchanging nature of international relations was conflictual interstate relations in an anarchical world. Lipschutz thus echoes what has become for many in IR a common sense dictum: that globalization at the end of the twentieth century is contributing to the erosion of the sovereignty of states resulting from various structures of global governance (economic, cultural, political, and military). In Lipschutz’s case, the ordering of the globe is provided most clearly by the “long-term acceptance of liberalism [and individualism, which Lipschutz adds later] as a global ‘operating system’”.<sup>13</sup> According to the author, despite their relatively frequent contested nature, the implicit rules and behaviours associated with liberalism and individualism enable the progressive displacement of ‘anarchy’ and a movement towards ‘society’

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<sup>9</sup> Ronnie Lipschutz, ‘Reconstructing World Politics: the Emergence of Global Civil Society’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 21, no. 3 (1992), 392.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

as the dominant ordering principal of global politics. Lipschutz contends that the principles of liberalism offer codes of conduct that provide order and are the basis of a form of global social organization that surpasses or transgresses those codes more directly circumscribed by the state. “The principles of economic and political liberalism thus come to represent something like the *jus civile* of the civilized community, existing above the laws of individual states.”<sup>14</sup>

Reminiscent of David Mitrany’s transnational functionalism, Lipschutz’s second factor is that the state, and by extension the interstate system, is unable to deal with certain “social welfare problems”.<sup>15</sup> Lipschutz locates this failure of the state with the crisis of the Welfare state during the 1970s and 1980s. The relevance of this inability of the Welfare state to properly deal with certain social problems for the creation of a global civil society is that the “growing state incompetence” in these matters is supposedly met with “growing societal competence”.<sup>16</sup> As the state sheds its many social welfare functions in reaction to its ‘incompetence’ which compounded by the state’s dwindling budgets, a myriad of non-state actors are poised to assume the abandoned social role of the state. And these non-state actors can, on occasion, organize themselves at global levels through global networks.

At the level of agency, national governments are unable, or loathe, to provide the kind of welfare services demanded by citizens, who are more and more aware of what they want and how they might get it. The micro response is to find new ways of providing these services, and citizens are increasingly capable of doing this. Moreover, while many of these efforts are locally focussed, they are not limited in terms of adopting forms of social organisation applied elsewhere around the world.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 407.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 392.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 409.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 419.

On this point, Martin Shaw offers a very similar analysis as the one proposed by Lipschutz to the extent that the emergence of a civil society spanning the globe stems from a functionalist crisis of the previous international system. As Shaw argues, “it is through such crises that we can increasingly identify global society and the development of its institutions.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, although Shaw is aware of the critique of functionalism’s system theories, he nevertheless locates the advent of global society with the increasing global dimension of the problems that need to be solved. Akin to Lipschutz’s view, Shaw contends that as the national dimension of current institutions become unable to properly address current issues, or become dysfunctional, then we begin to see the rise of a global society.

The third factor identified by Lipschutz which gives ground to a global civil society is that people are progressively replacing their state centred identities with other political identities that do not necessarily coincide with the political space of a territorialized states. “[T]he nation-state as the primary social grouping”<sup>19</sup> is bypassed by other forms of social identification. As social relations are inscribed in ‘economic, social and cultural’ networks that transgress state boundaries, the formation of a global civil society becomes discernable. It is these networks of social relations that Lipschutz identifies as the foundation of a global civil society which are undermining the “particular historical structures”<sup>20</sup> of the interstate world. Lipschutz goes as far as to suggest that this process of undermining a world ordered in terms of states is almost inherent to the nature of civil society itself. “[T]he growth of global civil society represents an ongoing project of society to

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<sup>18</sup> Martin Shaw, *Global Society and International Relations* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>19</sup> Lipschutz, ‘Reconstructing World Politics’, 415.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.

reconstruct, re-imagine, or re-map world politics.”<sup>21</sup> Comparable to Lipschutz, Shaw suggests that this global society was always there and had been merely masked by specific historical situations (notably the strong national identification typical of the Cold War period). With the end of the Cold War we are now able to see more clearly how social relations are in fact global. Any other level of analysis other than global social relations is merely an abstraction of this whole. “All discussion of society within particular regions, states or local communities, or within particular culturally defined limits, must be recognized as a relative abstraction from the global complex of social relations, and one which must ultimately be returned to an analysis of this whole.”<sup>22</sup> This is not to say that the processes that are contributing to creating a global society (i.e., those subsumed under the heading of globalization) are without contradictory tendencies. There are bumps along the road towards global society inasmuch as the processes of globalization are fragmented. Furthermore, Shaw admits that the elements which make up civil societies of national dimension are not entirely present at a global level. That is to say, the “central system of beliefs and values” (what Lipschutz saw as liberalism and individualism) and the “central institutions which clearly embody, uphold and enforce these beliefs and values”<sup>23</sup> may not be as clearly noticeable at a global level as they are at national levels. Despite this, Shaw’s argument is that global society is nevertheless in the process of becoming. These missing elements are in the process of construction. They are being generated by “economic, cultural and political relations develop[ed] rapidly independently of relations

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 391.

<sup>22</sup> Shaw, *Global Society and International Relations*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 12.

between states”.<sup>24</sup> The ‘beliefs and values’ of globalization are increasingly discernable to the extent that “people are coming to see their lives in terms of common expectations, values and goals.”<sup>25</sup> And this experience is one which is presumably shared by a sufficient amount of people on a world scale to constitute social relations making up a society of global proportion. The common expectations to which Shaw alludes are ones which are expressed in terms of common ‘cultural norms’, which include “ideas of standard of living, lifestyle, entitlements to welfare, citizenship rights, democracy, ethnic and linguistic rights, nationhood, gender equality, environmental quality, etc.”<sup>26</sup> With this unifying function of an emerging global culture, Shaw adds the increasing scope of the global economy as the other force of common experience. Not only is there a discernable “global division of labour and global market exchanges” there is also “a variety of global (and regional) economic institutions aiming to regulate these processes.”<sup>27</sup> These, along with the elements of a global culture mentioned above are supplemented by other institutions of a global civil society created to manage issues of global proportion (Shaw cites specifically the United Nations, non-governmental human rights organizations, humanitarian aid agencies, and environmental agencies). Even though these institutions remain overall quite weak in comparison to their national counterparts, they “are important forms in the embryonic global civil society.”<sup>28</sup>

It is within the broader context of the emergence of a global civil society that both

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 23.

Lipschutz and Shaw address the category of new social movements. For his part, Lipschutz, appealing to the work of Stephen Gill, contends that global civil society provides “political space for non-state actors to create alliances and linkages across borders and around the globe.”<sup>29</sup> The point of analysing global civil society is revealed by his appeal to Gill’s work. Lipschutz is seeking to identify the ‘new’ agents of global social change. And to do this he offers a reading of the context i.e., the emergence of a global civil society, in which such actors are created. As for Shaw, his contention is that in order to understand new social movements as actors influencing international relations one must view them as part of the “wider complex of civil society formations”.<sup>30</sup> Whether it be the ‘women’s movement’, ‘peace movements’, or ‘humanitarian organizations’, new social movements can only be understood as political actors of international relations if they are understood as elements of a global civil society which function within his holistic sociological view of global politics.

Global politics is the more inclusive and fundamental, and international politics represents an important sub-category, concerned with issues which arise in interstate relations. Global politics include all levels of world politics: issues within civil society, such as human rights, democracy, national and minority rights, the environment, poverty and social justice, class and gender equality, as well as interstate politics with its traditionally narrower agendas. Global politics are being extended through the growing links within civil society on a world scale and the emergence of a global civil society.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, for Shaw new social movements are but one type of the many “groups within society

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<sup>29</sup> Lipschutz, ‘Reconstructing World Politics’, 419.

<sup>30</sup> Martin Shaw, ‘Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond a Social Movements Approach’, in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 23, no. 3 (1994), 666.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 655.

exert[ing] direct or indirect influence in international relations.”<sup>32</sup> They are an instance of primarily national civil societies and may be instances of a global civil society depending on the issues involved. Only once we understand new social movements in this context can we begin to move towards a broader sociological understanding of global politics (or world politics) in which states, civil society, and social movements function and interact.

The difficulty of the reading of the category of new social movements proposed by Shaw as well as Lipschutz is that they tend to view the latter as autonomous political actors, which like other political actors (political parties for instance) act in the arena of politics in the hope of influencing decision makers in a direction favourable to their interests. Politics, both national, international, and global are understood in a very conventional sense of actors seeking to influence outcomes within the system. Despite claims to the contrary (namely by Shaw) there tends to be a strong functionalist view of politics and of society as a system made up of various parts. Crises are seen in terms of the dysfunction of the system and are resolved functionally. Both authors view new social movements as actors functioning in a system of increasingly global proportion, and they are a cause of that system whether through crises or through functionality. The global system is seen in terms of a zero sum game inasmuch as the state’s incompetence is met with a new actor (society) capable of assuming state social welfare functions. The new social movements to which these authors refer are not seen as *political* in themselves nor is the system they are describing. They are seen as actors within world or global politics (a self enclosed system) but they are not seen as political sites where the parameters of that system are being work out. The ‘politicalness’ of these movements is effectively occulted since they are envisioned as an effect of the system and not a site

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 666.

where the latter is (re)produced and maintained. Furthermore, there is a strong progressionist or evolutionist element in their thinking. Both authors see new social movements as elements of global politics and of an emerging global civil society which now transgresses the older world of international relations. These are the underlying realities in which social movements function. They are not seen as challenging the system but as elements of system management. Consequently, if we are concerned about questions of epistemology and ontology there is little which is genuinely 'new' about new social movements.

A more theoretically informed approach to the category of new social movements acquainted with the recent critical quarters of IT is offered by Warren Magnusson.<sup>33</sup> Contrary to Lipshutz and Shaw, the category of social movement for Magnusson is a very broad category which encompasses not only the new social movements as it is understood by other authors (e.g., feminism, environmentalism, peace movements, and the like), but also such broad phenomena as capitalism and socialism.<sup>34</sup> Thus, he seeks to make a clear distinction between the social movement as a phenomena and the "social movement organizations" which constitute various forms of expression and representation of the social movement itself.<sup>35</sup> For Magnusson, social movements combine space and politics, that is "the venue of everyday life" (space) with the "process that mobilizes

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<sup>33</sup> Most of the articles used here in which Magnusson has elaborated his position on social movements have been reunited in Warren Magnusson, *The Search for Political Space: Globalization, Social Movements, and the Urban Political Experience* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

<sup>34</sup> Warren Magnusson, 'Social Movements and the Global City', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 23, no. 3 (1994), 637.

<sup>35</sup> Warren Magnusson, 'Social Movements and the State: Presentation and Representation', in *A Different Kind of State? Popular Power and Democratic Administration*, eds. Gregory Albo, David Langille and Leo Panitch (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 123.

people politically” (movement).<sup>36</sup> They are political movements in two senses, both as sites of contestation of forms of domination (often organized by the state) as well as sites of “creative social action”.<sup>37</sup> Social movements are the fundamental and primary social units prior to both the privileged starting point of sociology, i.e., society, as well as the privileged starting point of political theory and IT, i.e., the state. Social movements are the primary “political community”<sup>38</sup> from which all other forms stem. Any other account, such as state centric approaches in IT, is a “distortion of political reality”,<sup>39</sup> a distortion which global problems have contributed to unveiling as just another form of “enclosure” of political space. As Magnusson writes:

The assumption of inevitability in contemporary discourse of the state seems curious when we consider the mounting evidence about the insufficiency of states as political communities. This is not just a matter of being too large for politics in Aristotle’s sense. It is also a matter of being too small to enclose the most pressing political problems: the control of military violence; management of the economy; redistribution of resources; protection of the biosphere. These are transnational if not global problems, demanding transnational if not global solutions. The state’s capacity to act in these matters diminished between 1970 and 1990, and this spawned a variety of ad hoc arrangements.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, as primary political units, social movements are effectively the location of “various forms of transformational politics”<sup>41</sup> and contemporary global social movements are contributing to altering the global ordering of social life.

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<sup>36</sup> Warren Magnusson, ‘The Reification of Political Community’, in *Contending Sovereignties: Redefining Political Community*, eds. R.B.J. Walker and Saul H. Mendlovitz (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990), 45.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>41</sup> Warren Magnusson, ‘Decentering the State, or Looking for Politics’ in *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice* ed. William K. Carroll (Victoria: Garamond Press, 1992), 79.

It is from this understanding of social movements that Magnusson approaches global politics. Following others, Magnusson approaches the specificity of global politics from the vantage point of the notion of “global city” which corresponds to a form of “global urban system”.<sup>42</sup> Magnusson argues that this way of viewing global politics involves a “conceptual shift” at two levels: first, world order is understood as a form of global city as opposed to a ‘state system’; and second, political actors within the global city are seen as social movements which “constitute or challenge that system”.<sup>43</sup> Inspired by the theorizing in the field of urban studies, the global urban system is composed of a number of “flows that connect and reconnect different places in the world.”<sup>44</sup> Flows are merely various forms of social movements. Capitalism, the market, and the state system are some of these flows, while other newer ones include environmentalism, feminism, and nationalism. Each movement addresses itself to a “different dimension of the human situation”.<sup>45</sup> As such, Magnusson views social movements as what “constitute, maintain, or challenge the global city in which we live.”<sup>46</sup> Even the interstate system and the market are themselves seen as a product of social movements presumably because they are produced, maintained, and challenged by ‘people acting politically’ (his definition of ‘movement’ noted above).

That the institutions of the state and the market are themselves effects of social movements are by no means exhausted, are facts that tend to be obscured by conventional modes of analysis. It is much more realistic to say that the threefold

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<sup>42</sup> His sources for his understanding of the term ‘global city’ appears in ‘Social Movements and the Global City’, 623, fn. 8.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 624.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 631.

<sup>45</sup> Magnusson, ‘Decentring the State’, 77.

<sup>46</sup> Magnusson, ‘Social Movements and the Global City’, 636.

separation of state, society, and economy, (should we add culture?) is a product of social movements, and these movements have to be understood as logically prior to the structures that they create.<sup>47</sup>

There is no predetermined order of what can be produced by social movements acting in the global city. On the contrary, Magnusson even suggests that “the civic mode of organisation [of the global city] is akin to one of those physical systems that scientists have been modelling with chaos theory.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, Magnusson suggests that his view of the global city constituted, maintained, and challenged by global social movements “defies every form of reductionism”<sup>49</sup> because there is no predetermined direction to the possible socio-political ordering of the globe created by social movements. “To speak of capitalism, statism, and nationalism is not to exhaust the list of governing social movements.”<sup>50</sup> These are all expressions of social movements which make up the global urban system of the global city, and like chaos theory seeks to suggest the order produced can not be predetermined.

Capitalism, statism, and other social movements appear to be productive of the forms of urbanism that we confront. Thus, they seem like movements within the city as a global order. That order can be comprehended politically if we recognise that none of these movements are simply natural, and that the interaction between them is constitutive of world government. To the extent that there is a world politics, it seems to be within and at the edge of urbanism, where the conditions of our lives are being created- or resisted.<sup>51</sup>

Admittedly, Magnusson’s theorization of new social movements is overall more theoretically

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 636-637.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 644.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 627.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 638.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 630-631.

informed than what we find with Lipschutz and Shaw. Furthermore, he seeks to emphasize (more so than the others) the contestatory potential of social movements which resonates quite closely with the stance of this thesis. However, Magnusson's view of new social movements is incompatible with the one I am proposing for two important reasons.

First, Magnusson generally tends to view social movements, and more specifically the newer social movements, as containing a propensity to be progressive. Granted, he does recognize that certain social movements can be "repressive and reactionary".<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, to the extent that "social movements are the politics of the people" while "government is the politics of the state"<sup>53</sup> he effectively places progressive social action and change in the sphere of social movements. Magnusson goes on to suggest that social movements, viewed as the "politics of people", are "the very core of *democratic* politics".<sup>54</sup> At first glance this equivalence between social movements and democracy would seem to coincide with what I am proposing with my usage of the theorizing on social movements formulated from an agonistic model of democratic politics. However, the view I put forth in this thesis rejects the possibility of attaching an *inherent* progressive dimension to any form of social movement. The 'progressive' character of any movement can only be located in the chain of equivalence that the movements seeks to construct within its discourse. As such, the 'progressive' character is by no means guaranteed nor is it unconditional. Second, social movements are for Magnusson knowable in a prediscursive form. They make up the subterranean forces that operate below the surface of the apparent ordering of the

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<sup>52</sup> Magnusson, 'Social Movements and the State', 125.

<sup>53</sup> Magnusson, 'The Reification of Political Community', 52.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

world, whether that apparent ordering is marked by states or markets. This is quite similar to an orthodox view of the inherent class make up of capitalist societies. As Magnusson points out “the global city was ‘always there’ from the beginning of modernity, but [...] its presence has been only dimly recognized.”<sup>55</sup> Thus, by viewing social movements as the unchanging ‘presence’ which orders ‘global politics’ Magnusson remains committed to identifying an essentialism prior to the political.

Among those who offer a more nuanced view of social movements within IT is Rob Walker. His work on this subject stems in part from being a participant in the meetings of the Committee for a Just World Peace (CJWP) which took place during the mid 1980s.<sup>56</sup> The reason that the committee, and by extension the related elements of Walker’s work, focus on social movements is that, again similar to the authors reviewed above, the latter are seen as a potentially transformative political forces in a world that is increasingly marked by “great danger, of looming cataclysms and barbaric injustices.”<sup>57</sup> Even though the state remains the locus for the contemporary practice of politics both national and international, Walker in his work for CJWP contends that “many of the most significant sources of historical change are now to be found in both large-scale structural transformations and small-scale social movements that occur both ‘above’ and ‘below’

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<sup>55</sup> Magnusson, ‘Social Movement and the Global City’, 625.

<sup>56</sup> The committee’s work was partly funded by the United Nations University Project on Peace and Global Transformations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It is from these meetings in which Walker was rapporteur that stems his well known ‘One World, Many Worlds: Struggles for a Just World Peace’ which appeared in 1988. This followed his earlier edited volume with Saul Mendlovitz ‘Towards a Just World Peace: Perspectives from Social Movements’ published in 1987 which was also presented to the committee.

<sup>57</sup> R.B.J. Walker, *One World, Many Worlds: Struggles for a Just World Peace* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988), 1.

the level of the state.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, the capacity of the state to remain the centre of “political activity”, unchanged by “economic, technological, social, cultural, and political transformations”<sup>59</sup> is unlikely. The significance of the advent of new social movements is that they may “generate new forms of political practice in the face of fundamental historical change” to the extent that “[l]arge-scale transformations always bring forth new political actors and new forms of political action.”<sup>60</sup> Echoes of this view are easily found throughout Walker’s own individual works outside of his role in the CJWP.<sup>61</sup> This is the historical context in which new social movements are placed and seen as significant political factors within the rapidly changing and degenerating world of global politics.

Walker begins by noting that social movements, particularly in IT, have generally been subjected to what he calls “discursive economies of scale”<sup>62</sup> which tend to exclude them as significant factors in the course of international relations. Not only have social movements been seen as too small to be of importance for the practice of international relations, they are generally

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<sup>58</sup> R.B.J. Walker and Saul H. Mendlovitz, ‘Peace, Politics and Contemporary Social Movements’, in *Towards a Just World Peace: Perspectives from Social Movements*, eds. R.B.J. Walker and Saul H. Mendlovitz (London: Butterworths, 1987), 6.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 and 8.

<sup>61</sup> Notably Walker’s influential book *Inside/ Outside* in which he begins by stating: “My concern with the limits of the modern political imagination is informed both by a sense of the need for alternative forms of political practice under contemporary conditions and a sense that fairly profound transformations are currently in progress.” See R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/ Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ix. A remark is necessary here in regards to Walker’s standpoint on social movements. Walker confronts us with the need to make a distinction in his work on this subject. The distinction lies between what can be seen as a more theoretically sophisticated position from the position he elaborates as rapporteur for CJWP. Evidence of the former can be found in Walker, ‘Social Movements/ World Politics’ and R.B.J. Walker, ‘International Relations and the Concept of the Political’, in *International Relations Theory Today*, eds. Ken Booth and Steve Smith (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 306-327. Evidence of the latter can be found in Walker, *One World, Many Worlds*. The more theoretically sophisticated position is what is of interest for this thesis and is what I explore here.

<sup>62</sup> R.B.J. Walker, ‘Social Movements/ World Politics’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 23, no.3 (1994), 669.

categorized as social actors within the state and thus of little consequence for the high politics of IR. Consequently, as Walker notes, any influence that social movements can bring to bear on the course of international events is generally seen as requiring mediation by the state. This view is informed by the traditional modernist view of politics which locates the latter at the level of the state. For Walker this modernist view takes as given and reaffirms the inside/ outside, national/ international dichotomy as well as the liberal account of politics which is limited to “individuals, states, and anarchies”.<sup>63</sup> The effect of this political discourse which informs the dominant view of social movements is to exclude them from the realm of global politics.

Framed in this context especially, the conjunction of social movements with world politics offers a clear case of ontological impossibility. Small cannot compete with large, and lower/ inner cannot impinge on higher/ outer. On both grounds, social movements and world politics can have only the most tenuous of connections. This sense of disjunction is produced, reproduced and exchanged throughout the political discourses of modern societies.<sup>64</sup>

Up to this point, Walker’s reading of social movements within IT differs only slightly from those reviewed above inasmuch as he also sees the marginalization of social movements as an effect of the predominant political imaginary which tends to privilege the state as the only worthy political actor or at the very least the final political mediator through which social movements can impact on global politics. And he also places social movements within the category of transformative and progressive political forces. Where Walker’s analysis offers an original standpoint is in his rejection of the predominant counter view in IT seen above. Contrary to authors such as Lipschutz, Shaw and Magnusson, Walker does not locate social movements as elements of a prior more profound reality

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 671.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 672.

such as ‘a global civil society’, ‘a global society’, or ‘a global city’. This tendency of identifying the ‘true’ underlying reality of global politics ends up substituting one essentialism for another. In other words, they tend to substitute the dominant state centric ontology of IT with some form of ‘global civil society’ in which social movements become determinate factors for global politics. They merely provide the contraposition to what they generally see as an insufficient analysis of the way the world works. The inside/ outside dichotomy is substituted for the local/ global dichotomy. For Walker, this formulation of a contraposition mirrors closely the Kantian inspired tradition in IT which substitute anarchy with a peace based universal ethics.<sup>65</sup> Despite their useful critique and destabilization of state centric views, in the end they remain committed to the same modernist epistemological grounding to the extent that they seek to identify the true pre-political forces that make up the ‘global system’. This foundation is taken as pre-political and absent of contingency and renders a unified, if hidden, view of the social.

The innovation of Walker’s work on social movements is to push towards an understanding of the latter which precisely raises questions of foundation and metaphysics. More accurately, as forms of new political practice, social movements contribute to challenging, destabilizing, and rendering contingent the metaphysical commitments in which the creation of the state played a crucial role. Walker contends that the practice of politics of the state form contributed to resolving three interrelated epistemological problématiques which previously had been resolved through a theological matrix: universality/ particularity, self/ other and space/ time.<sup>66</sup> The territorial state form resolves these three problématiques politically, that is through certain

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 673.

<sup>66</sup> Walker, ‘International Relations and the Concept of the Political’, 320-321.

political practices which include/ exclude certain possibilities. For Walker, traditional IR theory has been an accomplice in maintaining and patrolling these resolutions.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the universal and the particular are no longer dealt with hierarchically but are resolved by a clear demarcation between an inside and an outside (universal within/ particular without). The inside/ outside further enables the resolution of the self/ other not only by enabling the creation of ‘national sovereign self’ but also by demarcating the external ‘other’ which often is created as a belligerent ‘other’, a particular in need of universalizing, or worst a particular threatening the universal and in need of destruction. And finally, in terms of space/ time, the state expresses a specific account of space which is territorially circumscribed as well as reinforcing a specific account of time, i.e., historical time. For Walker, not only does the state form of political practice enable and patrol these resolutions but it also depends upon them for its existence. In other words, the practice of international relations as the political practice of the state form deploys these metaphysical commitments and works at maintaining them since they are for both their condition of possibility. There is therefore, a tight interrelation between the practice of state politics and the foundation which sustain this practice. This mirrors the notions of performative/ constative explored through Derrida’s view of foundation examined in Chapter Two.

The specifically modern resolution of metaphysics is precisely the epistemological grounding which for Walker social movements may be challenging, destabilizing or rendering contingent, but which has generally not been relinquished by those in IR who have addressed social

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<sup>67</sup> Hence the second part to the title of his seminal work *Inside/ Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*. One can draw a parallel between this juncture of Walker’s thinking and the theoretical framework elaborated in Chapter Two. For Walker, the metaphysical commitments of modernity are maintained through political practices among which we find the political practice of international relations. Thus, in this sense, the metaphysical foundation of modernity is sustained politically. This echoes my primary argument that foundation is political and the political is the attempt at laying foundation.

movements from the anti-statist standpoint explored earlier.

How social movements may be challenging, destabilizing or rendering contingent is through the new forms of political practice that some of them articulate which “contribute to the reconfiguration of the political under contemporary conditions”.<sup>68</sup>

[B]y insisting that it is because social movements are precisely *movements*, and because they do not always conform to the prevailing discourses of sovereignty or a simple counter-sovereignty, that they can be read as interesting forms of *political* practice.<sup>69</sup>

Thus Walker, as am I, is far less concerned with “how powerful or influential social movements are, or how they fulfil established expectations of what they must be and must become”.<sup>70</sup> To a certain extent, this form of reasoning deployed by the anti-statists’ views of social movements remains caught within the ‘discursive economies of scale’ informed by the epistemological grounding of the state form, since social movements are seen and measured in the same terms as states are within state centric views. That is, social movements are seen as political actors to the extent that they are able to yield influence and power in a similar manner as states.

As Walker points out, what is more crucial to understand is how the new forms of political practice by which social movements may be achieving alternative resolutions to the metaphysical commitments put forth by the state form of political practice. These new forms are to be found in the “nomadic connections”<sup>71</sup> which social movements establish. With nomadic

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<sup>68</sup> Walker, ‘Social Movements/ World Politics’, 675.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 674.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 674–675.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 699.

connections Walker, like Connolly,<sup>72</sup> seeks to articulate the form of politics which new social movements may be generating, a form which is not “structurally determined, nor fixated on states”.<sup>73</sup> Walker rightly admits that he largely fails to develop sufficiently his notion of nomadic connections, and how more precisely they can be seen as challenging the metaphysical commitments of the state form. Furthermore, he acknowledges that social movements are not all engaged in some form of metaphysical reversal. Some are very adept at redeploing the state centred epistemological resolutions which reinforce inclusionary/ exclusionary political practices despite the fact that for Walker by doing so they “simply affirm the limits of their ambition.”<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, social movements do express alternative forms of political practice which may be read as transgressing the universal/ particular, self/ other, space/ time resolutions enforced by the state political form. The environmental movement or the feminist movement for instance may be seen as forcing us to review the normative codes of the state which resolved these metaphysical problématiques. Feminism challenges, destabilizes, and renders contingent the universal/ particular resolution offered by the male gendered specific reading of IT; and environmentalism does the same for the inside/ outside dichotomy of the modern political practice of states by showing the global impact of environmental degradation. It is these ‘common’ challenges of the metaphysical resolutions maintained by the state form that constitute the ‘nomadic connections’ of social movements. The *connection* comes from the common challenge. They are specifically *nomadic* because for Walker they do not force

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<sup>72</sup> William E. Connolly, ‘Tocqueville, Territory, and Violence’, in *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities*, eds. Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 153-162.

<sup>73</sup> Walker, ‘Social Movements/ World Politics’, 695.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 699.

violently a resolution of the three problématiques by framing them territorially. In effect, they offer an attempt at a more pluralist resolution of the universal/ particular, self/ other and space/ time problématiques unlike “the politics of inclusions and exclusions, of the reconciliation of identities and differences, expressed by the modern territorial state.”<sup>75</sup>

Despite the fact that Walker’s notion of ‘nomadic connections’ as a new form of practice of politics put forth by social movements remains underdeveloped his reading is still very useful to what I am proposing here in three important respects. First, Walker locates the significance of social movements for IT at the more profound level of metaphysics. Indeed, unlike any of the other authors reviewed, Walker recognizes that social movements imply metaphysical commitments. In other words, through their practice of politics they express certain metaphysical commitments which may be contributing to unravelling those which were held by the state political form. Second, and related to the first, Walker argues that social movements do not occur prior to the *political*. Rather, they are political in the sense proposed by this thesis. That is, social movements are involved with foundation and on occasion certain social movements are involved with contesting foundation, particularly the resolutions enforced by the modern state. As such, they can be seen as the site of an antagonism, where the close sutured view of the world proposed by the state on various issues are contested. And finally, the notion of nomadic connection at a discursive level finds resonance with the term ‘chain of equivalence’ explored in Chapter Four. In other words, one could imagine that the manner in which social movements would create nomadic connections is through the multiple chains of equivalence that operate between various social movements engaged in various forms of social struggle. The connection becomes a discursive one. As a site where nomadic connections

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

become apparent, the parallel People's summits on APEC may be an instance in which forms of practice of politics which are not structurally determined, nor indeed confined to the state form, are being articulated. At the same time as the NGOs gathered at the People's summit remained very diverse in their specific counterdiscourses, the fact that the gathering occurs annually suggest that there is some form of nomadic connection. And finally, the fact that they are challenging APEC, can be seen as destabilizing and rendering contingent the inside/ outside metaphysical commitment (re)deployed by APEC and which occults the democratic imaginary.

Where I tend to disagree with Walker is on his contention that the 'nomadic connections' as a form of political practice established by social movements *necessarily* transgress the metaphysical commitments enforced by the state. In other words, there seems to be suggestions that social movements by definition are engaged in unravelling the metaphysical commitments of modernity in which the state is an active component. Granted, there is considerable ambiguity in Walker's thinking on this point. As mentioned above, he does recognize that not all social movements are to be celebrated as progressive or transformative social and political forces. However, he does state that "social movements that work entirely within the modern reification of spatiotemporal relations *simply affirm the limits of their ambition.*"<sup>76</sup> This would seem to suggest that social movements have prior existence to the discursive possibilities they open and that it is this prior existence which is indicative of metaphysical reversal. I can not agree with this. I do agree that social movements open the possibility of transgressing the forced resolutions of the universal/particular, self/ other and space/ time problématiques, and that this may be a new form of practice of politics. But there is nothing saying that it will occur in this manner. It is merely a discursive

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.(emphasis added).

possibility. The discursive challenge must be constructed in a manner which does not reproduce the modern resolutions of these metaphysical problématiques. Much like what is proposed by Cecelia Lynch, I would argue that social movements merely offer *the potential* for a discursive challenge to issues which have been predominantly read through the metaphysical commitments enforced by the state. It is to Lynch's reading that I now turn to conclude this first section.

Lynch approaches new social movements and globalization from the standpoint of the former.<sup>77</sup> Lynch sees globalization (namely economic globalization) as an obstacle to the realization of the goals of new social movements, and "any effective response to globalization is predicated upon the ability of social movements to articulate a meaningful normative, or discursive, challenge."<sup>78</sup> For Lynch, the reason that contemporary social movements need to formulate responses to globalization is that the processes associated with it wield considerable power on decision making "across the globe"<sup>79</sup> and therefore, directly affect the realization of their goals. Her objective is to review the success of certain social movements in their responses to mounting an effective alternative to globalization. One such instance for Lynch is the discursive challenge to economic globalization offered by the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) formed in 1994. Based in San Francisco, California the IFG is an alliance of "activists, scholars, economists, researchers, and writers"<sup>80</sup> which seeks to formulate alternatives to economic globalization. According to Lynch, IFG represents a social movement which has embarked on a direct normative

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<sup>77</sup> Cecelia Lynch, 'Social Movements and the Problem of Globalization', *Alternatives*, 23, no. 2 (1998), 149-173.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>80</sup> See IFG's web site, May 8, 2000 - <http://www.ifg.org> -.

challenge to the restructuring of global political and economic arrangements which accompany the global economy. The significance of this group is that it seeks to formulate a counterdiscourse specific to globalization. She writes:

[...] social-movement activists in the IFG are attempting to create a normative stance that provides a discursive alternative to globalization and reverses the normative power that the faith in free trade and the fear of losing one's competitive position hold across social strata.<sup>81</sup>

Their success hinges precisely on the formulation of this normative challenge. As Lynch notes, although the contours of this challenge are still nebulous, the focus has been on “notions of relocalization” of economic control and on notions of “sustainable development” and local “democratic decision making”.<sup>82</sup>

In focussing on the need for new social movements to offer a ‘discursive/ normative challenge’ to globalization, Lynch, contrary to Lipschutz and Shaw, provides us with a view within IT of new social movements that would coincide with the broad theoretical framework proposed by an agonistic model of democratic politics. Although Lynch does not approach the discursive challenge mounted by the NGOs she cites in such a manner (in particular she does not see collective action as the result of antagonism and the negation of identity), one could contend that the success of social movements such as IFG hinges on its ability to establish a chain of equivalence through certain nodal points (in this case sustainable development, relocalization, local democratic decision making). As would Laclau and Mouffe in their formulation of how collective action can occur, Lynch recognizes indirectly that the success rests on the nodal points used in formulating the

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<sup>81</sup> Lynch, ‘Social Movements and the Problem of Globalization’ 157.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 158.

alternative normative stance to economic globalization. Lynch adds however, that part of the problem of globalization is that overarching notions such as ‘sustainable development’ sometimes fail to coincide in a similar manner with the “beliefs and practices” of all those involved in transnational social action. In other words, the problem of globalization is precisely that it contributes in revealing the contingent foundations of such notions by locating them as typically Western and Modern, among other things. She writes,

[...] this confrontation of beliefs and practices [...] raises the question of whether notions like ‘sustainable development’ can provide a basis for critical reflection and dialogue among activists or whether they easily become tropes that promote the illusion of meaningful action across divides.<sup>83</sup>

Contrary to the alternative discursive challenges of earlier social movements, the “normative contestation of globalization [...] reveals fissures that are more difficult to bridge.”<sup>84</sup> Indeed, following Walker, these fissures are quite deep inasmuch as they potentially transgress the metaphysical commitments of modernity. Lynch concludes her article by stating that consequences of globalization’s “diversifying effect” is to reveal the primary importance of “the discursive and normative content”<sup>85</sup> of any oppositional discourse.

In terms of the level at which social movements are to be apprehended, Lynch’s view of the category of new social movements is the closest to my own. Although Lynch by no means approaches the category of new social movements in precisely the same language, she does nevertheless view the latter from the standpoint of discursivity. What new social movements

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 167.

represent is a *discursive challenge* to dominant ways of viewing globalization. One could draw a parallel between Lynch's conclusion in regards to the success of the discursive challenge of new social movements to globalization and Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of Radical Democracy. For Lynch, the success stems from how the challenge is formulated at the level of discourse. The "content" of that discursive challenge is pivotal in order "to provide a positive normative foundation".<sup>86</sup> Essentially, this is a parallel to Laclau and Mouffe's notion of a chain of equivalence between nodal points that function as empty signifiers. In the example raised by Lynch the empty signifier would be 'sustainable development'. And the discursive challenge would be formulated in a manner which brings through this nodal point an alternative meaning to economic globalization. Similar to equality and liberty, 'sustainable development' becomes a nodal point to which various social movements can draw equivalences.

Where I disagree slightly with Lynch is on her view of globalization (which reproduces a similar view to that of Mouffe) as well as on her view on consensus as an attainable objective. First, globalization is seen merely as a threat, and not as opening political sites. APEC, as an instance of globalization is undoubtedly seen as a threat by the NGOs which oppose it. And yet, it is also a political site which creates the possibility to oppose globalization. The possibility to mount a discursive challenge is enabled by the fact that APEC gives a figure to economic globalization. This figure appears as an unyielding image of economic globalization, an unyielding discourse on the social which occults difference. The more APEC's discourse of economic globalization seeks to produce a sutured view of the social, the more it runs the risk of producing antagonisms and the possibility of mounting an alternative discursive challenge. Second, Lynch does

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 160.

suggest that a unified front against globalization remains a possibility and more importantly is still a viable objective beyond mounting the discursive challenge. I would argue that we never move beyond the discursive challenge, that ‘sustainable development’ for instance remains as a vanishing point of which the content remains conditional, always open. There can be no final consensus succeeding in eliminating all antagonism even if that final consensus would be the result of the ‘victory’ of the discursive challenge mounted by NGOs.

As the reader will have noticed, the two most important contributions to the theorization of the category of new social movements within IT for this thesis is offered by Walker and Lynch. As with Walker, I see the significance of new social movement as located at the level of metaphysics. More particularly, what social movements open in the case of the NGOs which oppose APEC is the *possibility* of challenging, destabilizing and rendering contingent how the state form of political practice answered the question of democracy territorially by resolving metaphysics territorially. NGO opposition to APEC is thus not only a potential challenge at the level of the practice of politics APEC carries, it is also a possible challenge at the level of the *political*. Consequently, it is a challenge of the foundations which APEC deploys in its discourses, as we saw through the discursive manoeuvres in Chapter Three. As with Lynch, I view social movements as the level of discursivity since it is at this level that they are knowable. The challenge to APEC’s foundational resolutions are to be found at the level of discourse and how, following Mouffe and Laclau, that discourse seeks to articulate a chain of equivalence between the democratic experience provided by the nationally circumscribed institutions of democracy and democracy as a symbolic ordering of social relations exceeding territorial space. As such, the way I see new social movements is as political sites, as sites where there is a possibility in creating new discursive chains of

equivalence, so that the articulation of the chain of equivalence becomes one in which territorialization is no longer a necessary prerequisite for democracy. Through repetition and iteration the structure is opened to a new articulation which may lead to a deterritorialized form of democracy. This further opens the possibility to contest APEC's discourse on economic globalization in terms of agonism. This democracy does not stem from the demise of the interstate world or the erosion of national sovereignty. It is opened by the transformative potential contained with the chain of equivalence that is being constructed by the NGO opposition to APEC, itself produced by APEC's attempt at figuring a closed sutured view of the world through its discourse on the social. The chain of equivalence that is being constructed among NGOs is not only one in which there becomes an equivalence between democracy and ecology, democracy and sustainable development, democracy and economy, and so forth, but it is also one in which the chain of equivalence establishes a correspondence between national democracy and democracy as a symbolic ordering of social relations that is not necessarily territorially circumscribed.

The objective of this first section was to develop our position vis-à-vis the notion of social movements as it has been articulated within IT while remaining congruous with the broader theoretical stance of this thesis. It is from this position that I will now address the NGO discourse which has opposed APEC.

### ***The parallel NGO forums on APEC***

Initial NGO opposition to APEC began somewhat extemporaneously in 1993 coinciding with the first meeting of APEC economic leaders in Seattle, Washington. Those involved were mostly American based environmental NGOs. Of the 21 signatories of an open letter of

contestation to APEC leaders,<sup>87</sup> only a few NGOs focused on issues other than the environment or ecology, such as trade, and human rights. As such, of the ten recommendations the letter proposed to APEC leaders, eight dealt directly with the impact of international trade and international trade agreements on broadly defined ecological issues such as trade in endangered species, toxic waste trade, and trade in temperate and tropical timber. The last two recommendations dealt with debt relief and greater market access to the developed countries for the “developing nations” of APEC.<sup>88</sup> Both these recommendations were framed within the view that without debt relief and greater market access the governments of ‘developing countries’ would not be able to adequately protect the environment. The conclusion of the letter called for APEC to include the environment as a crosscutting issue for all of its Working Groups as well as create a Working Group specifically geared towards addressing trade and the environment. Creating some form of environmental advisory body within APEC’s structure similar to the former EPG or the present ABAC continues to be a central demand of at least one of the major environmental NGOs which has engaged substantially with APEC: the Washington based Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development.<sup>89</sup> At the International NGO Conference on APEC in Kyoto in November of 1995, the current Director of the Environment Program at the Nautilus Institute, Lyuba Zarsky argued in favor of engaging APEC in the hopes of making compatible its trade and investment liberalization

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<sup>87</sup> Other than the open letter, NGOs also organized media events, protest activities, and published special issues of *ECO*, an NGO environmental bulletin, focusing on APEC.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Non-Governmental Organizations’ Open Letter to APEC’, reprinted in *APEC ‘93 WATCH / ECO* no. 2 (November 16, 1993).

<sup>89</sup> See Lyuba Zarsky and Jason Hunter, ‘Environmental Cooperation at APEC: The First Five Years’, The Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development, Working Paper No. 6 (October 1996), and Lyuba Zarsky, ‘APEC, Globalization, and the ‘Sustainable Development’ Agenda’, *Asian Perspective*, 22, (1998), 133-168.

discourse with the ‘sustainable development’ agenda.<sup>90</sup> As such, contrary to most other NGOs present at the parallel forums (aside from labour as we will see later), the standpoint favoured by certain environmental organizations as is highlighted both by the 1993 open letter as well as the position of the Nautilus Institute is to engage APEC in a policy dialogue rather than reject APEC outright. The position of engagement rather than rejection is related to how achieving ‘sustainable development’ internationally is envisioned. Sustainable development is taken as equivalent to “the idea that environmental protection could- and should- be built into the design of economic development plans and policies [of states], rather than addressed as an aftermath of economic growth.”<sup>91</sup> From this position, there is no inherent incompatibility between, on the one hand, economic development through increased international trade, and sustainable development on the other. As the open letter states:

International trade can and must be constructed to promote sustainable development. Liberalized trade can reward efficiency and promote investment in environmentally sound goods and services, or it can cause competition based on ever-lower standards of environmental protection and worker health and safety. To capture the benefits and avoid the pitfalls of trade, APEC leaders should highlight the need for environmental reform of international trade [...]<sup>92</sup>

Consequently, sustainable development becomes the outcome of the enforcement by the state of policies which protect the environment. Framed within economic globalization, coordination or harmonization of environmental protection policies is viewed through international regimes such as APEC and becomes necessary for “creating common rules to govern common resources.”<sup>93</sup> Thus,

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<sup>90</sup> Lyuba Zarsky, ‘APEC and the Environment’, *AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, 26, no. 4 (1996), 26-29.

<sup>91</sup> Zarsky, ‘APEC, Globalization, and the ‘Sustainable Development’ Agenda’, 134.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Non-Governmental Organizations’ Open Letter to APEC’.

<sup>93</sup> Zarsky, ‘APEC and the Environment’, 27.

in the formulation of its discourse on sustainable development, the environmental NGOs engaged with APEC redeploy the interstate imaginary and the practice of politics this imaginary engenders. The objective becomes to formulate an international consensus on the relationship between environmental protection and trade through APEC. Because the sustainable development discourse draws a chain of equivalences with this imaginary through the meaning it assigns to environmental protection, i.e., protection afforded by the state through its policies and through interstate organizations, there is no substantial antagonism present between APEC's discourse and that of the environmental NGOs. APEC's discourse does not fundamentally subvert the sustainable development discourse, at least as it was formulated by the open letter of environmental NGOs in 1993 and since then by the Nautilus Institute.<sup>94</sup> Sustainable development is located at the level of the state and its practice of politics. It is for this reason that the Nautilus Institute concludes in its recent evaluation of APEC and the environment that even though "programmatic initiatives to date are meager", as the only interstate multilateral fora for the Asia-Pacific "APEC [continues to be] a vehicle for promoting cooperative engagement with Asia on a number of fronts, including environmental cooperation."<sup>95</sup> And within this limited frame, APEC has appeared to do this, initially with its Framework of Principles for Integrating Economy and Environment in APEC and the APEC Environmental Vision Statement produced in 1994 which coincided with the first meeting of APEC environment ministers. In 1995, APEC leaders also launched an initiative to examine the impact of expanding population and economic growth on food, energy and the environment which became

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<sup>94</sup> On a more critical view of the relationship between APEC and environmental issues see Walden Bello and Nicola Bullard, 'APEC and the Environment: A Report Commissioned by the Rio + 5 Forum' (Bangkok: Focus on the Global South, 1997).

<sup>95</sup> Zarsky, 'APEC, Globalization, and the Sustainable Development Agenda', 160 and 161.

known as the FEEEP initiative (Food, Energy, Environment, Economic Growth, Population).<sup>96</sup> And finally, in 1996, APEC identified three priority areas for environmental cooperation: Sustainable Cities, Clean Production/ Clean Technology, and Protection of the Marine Environment. The reason the results of these initiatives have been ‘meager’ according to the Nautilus Institute is not because of a fundamental incompatibility between APEC as an interstate regime and environmental protection. Rather, failure is merely associated with the difficulties of the politics of consensus building within an interstate world where each actor works at promoting its own interests.

The somewhat conciliatory stance found in the discourse of NGOs in 1993 was not reproduced in 1994 when the APEC chair, the Indonesian government, effectively made it impossible for NGOs to organize a parallel forum in Jakarta. In the months leading up to the meeting of APEC leaders in Bogor, Indonesian NGOs were faced with the possible implementation of a draft presidential decree which sought to give the government the power to bar any NGO judged to be engaged in political activities or other activities deemed to be a threat to the national interest. Such activities included “undermining the authority of the government and/ or discrediting the government; obstructing the implementation of development programs; [and] other activities which have the potential to adversely affect political stability and security”.<sup>97</sup> Aside from the draft decree aimed at crushing NGO opposition, more than 48,000 soldiers and police personnel participating in pre-APEC operations to clean up Jakarta (called *Operasi Berish*, or Operation Clean Up) created an environment in which NGOs faced with severe state repression and intimidation had little

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<sup>96</sup> APEC Economic Committee, *The Impact of Expanding Population and Economic Growth on Food, Energy and the Environment in the APEC Region. Report to APEC Economic Leaders Building Sustainable Prosperity in APEC: Options for Possible Joint Actions* (Singapore: APEC secretariat, 1998).

<sup>97</sup> Human Rights Watch/ Asia, ‘Tightening Up in Indonesia Before the APEC Summit’, *Human Rights Watch/ Asia*, 6, no. 12 (October 1994), 2.

possibility of organizing opposition safely.<sup>98</sup>

### *The International NGO Conference on APEC (Kyoto 1995)*

Because of what had occurred in Indonesia,<sup>99</sup> the following year marked the first large scale international opposition to APEC which came in the form of three separate events: the creation of Asia Pacific Labour Network (APLN) by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the Symposium on Globalization and Workers' Human Rights in the APEC Region, and the precursor to the 'People's Summits', the International NGO Conference on APEC. Coinciding with APEC's third leaders meeting in Osaka in 1995, the APLN was established in view of specifically encompassing the trade labour unions in APEC countries which are affiliates of the ICFTU. It marked the first time organized labour assigned significant attention to APEC. Since then, the APLN has held each year its own parallel meeting to shadow APEC's meeting of heads of state. It has held its meeting apart from the people's summits organized by other NGOs while also voicing a commitment at its sixteenth world congress in 1996 to work with other NGOs opposed

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<sup>98</sup> Despite obvious government scare tactics backed by armed forces, NGOs had managed to prepare a press conference in order to voice their views on APEC. However, when delegates arrived at the conference location, they were told by managers of the conference hall that their reservations had been cancelled most likely by the Indonesian military. See Jens Wilkinson, 'Dealing With a Fiction: The NGO Conference on APEC', *AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, 26, no. 4 (1996), 8. See also the 'Asia Pacific NGO Working Group on APEC' and the 'Joint Statement to the Media by the Asia Pacific NGO Working Group on APEC (Response to the Leaders' Statement)' reproduced in *Challenging the Mainstream: APEC and the Asia-Pacific Development Debate*, eds. Ed Tadem and Lakshmi Daniel (Hong Kong: ARENA, Asia Alliance of YMCA's, Christian Conference for Asia and Documentation for Action Groups in Asia, 1995), 119-122 and 127-130.

<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the publication of *Challenging the Mainstream* was a direct result of efforts by four East Asian based NGOs to provide a forum for NGO opposition to APEC in wake of the events in Indonesia. The statement that was to be read at the conference appears in the publication. See Ed Tandem, 'Preface', in *Challenging the Mainstream*, 7.

to APEC.<sup>100</sup> Through its APLN the ICFTU's position since its inaugural meeting in 1995 has sought engagement with APEC, calling for a "working relationship with the secretariat, committees, working groups and other associated bodies of the APEC process."<sup>101</sup> As such, the ICFTU has pressed for the creation of an "APEC Labour Forum" which would act as a labour advisory body within APEC's official structure along the same lines as the ABAC, APEC's business advisory body.<sup>102</sup> Even though the ICFTU has criticized the limited focus of APEC's discourse, it nevertheless accepts APEC as a legitimate forum and has sought to participate within its processes rather than oppose it outright. Part of the basis for ICFTU's position stems from how the organization views its role within the context of 'globalization'. Seeing itself as the "international voice of labour" the ICFTU has establish as one of its roles to "campaign and participate in the decisionmaking process for the establishment of international policies and standards".<sup>103</sup> This view of its role substantially reduces any antagonism between the ICFTU and APEC since the latter is perceived as part of the international 'decisionmaking process'. APEC is seen as a medium through which the ICFTU can realize its goals and fulfill what it sees as being its role. For its part, the

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<sup>100</sup> John Price, 'Shadowing APEC: Nongovernmental Organizations Build Regional Alliances', *Asian Perspective*, 22, no. 2 (1998), 27.

<sup>101</sup> ICFTU/APLN, 'A Trade Union Perspective on the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC)' (First Regional Conference of the ICFTU APLN, Melbourne, September 10-11, 1995), appendix I. In part, the ICFTU has succeeded in establishing an informal consultation process with APEC. Since 1995, the ICFTU has met with either the head of state or government officials of the host government of the annual APEC leaders meeting. Furthermore, APEC officials have participated in some of the APLN's regional conferences. See ICFTU/ APLN, 'Broadening APEC's Social Dimension: Trade Union Statement to the 1999 APEC Leader's Meeting' (Fifth Regional Conference, Wellington, New Zealand, 14-16 August 1999).

<sup>102</sup> ICFTU/ APLN, 'APEC's Role in Achieving Global Recovery from the Asian Financial and Economic Crisis' (Trade Union Statement to the 1998 APEC Leaders' Meeting adopted by the Fourth Conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Asia Pacific Labour Network, Kuala Lumpur, 28-30 September 1998).

<sup>103</sup> 16th World Congress of the ICFTU, 'Free Trade Unionism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Priorities for ICFTU Action', (Congress Resolutions, Brussels, June 25-29, 1996).

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symposium on Globalization and Workers' Human Rights in the APEC Region (the second event of organized opposition to APEC in 1995) focussed on the protection of labour rights within APEC countries. Organized by human rights and labour organizations, the symposium produced a list of recommendations addressed to APEC leaders and their ministers. Most significantly, the recommendations called for the establishment of formal consultations with labour and human rights NGOs following the model APEC had already established with business forums.<sup>104</sup> As such, like the ICFTU, the position which was formulated by the NGOs at the symposium sought engagement with APEC while criticizing the narrowness of its agenda. The flaws with APEC are therefore not structural, i.e., interstate economic cooperation. Rather, what is being contested is APEC's discourse and the meaning which accompanies its practice of politics. The view of politics which accompanies this contestation continues to see the state as the locus for the practice of politics and as the final mediator for competing interest.

The International NGO Conference on APEC on the other hand, did not seek engagement with APEC, at least not in same formal manner. Reuniting 135 representatives from 22 countries over two days this precursor to the future 'People's Summits' gave way to three important landmarks for the future of organized opposition to APEC. First, the NGO conference in Kyoto was explicitly organized as an international event and sought foreign participation. Although smaller in scale, this placed the conference in line with other international NGO conferences such as the one held in parallel to the Rio Summit in 1992. Second, Kyoto inaugurated what has become

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<sup>104</sup> 'Kyoto Statement on Workers' Human Rights in the APEC Region' (Symposium on Globalization and Workers' Human Rights in the APEC Region, Kyoto, November 12, 1995) reproduced in Policy Working Group of the Canadian Organizing Network, 'Canada and APEC: Perspectives from Civil Society' (Discussion Paper prepared by the Policy Working Group of the Canadian Organizing Network for the 1997 People's Summit on APEC, July 30, 1997).

a tradition for the parallel forums, that is the formulation of a final conference declaration or statement issued as much to the leaders of APEC as to the general public. As mentioned earlier, these statements are of particular relevance to this chapter since they offer us a entry point into the discourse of NGOs, and as such enable us to examine both the antagonism which marks the APEC/ NGO relation as well as the identity construction of the alternative vision the discourse seeks to capture. Finally, the third important landmark is that the tone of the opposition became more antagonistic while still falling within the realm of agonism. As indicated in the opening paragraph of the two page Kyoto Statement:

As representatives of more than 100 non-government organisations and trade unions, advocating the interests of millions throughout the region covered by APEC, we fully support cooperation among its countries and their peoples. However, we unanimously reject the basic philosophy, framework and assumptions of the model of free market and trade liberalisation embraced by the APEC agenda. This model does not lead to freedom; it negates the developmental and democratic aspirations of the people.<sup>105</sup>

Although the debate between engagement or rejection continued to be a significant feature of the NGO summits at least until 1997, the Kyoto Statement articulated a position which would become dominant for the future of the parallel forums, that is that APEC's discourse was antithetical to the views espoused by the majority of NGO participants. In the name of the 'people', the Kyoto Statement inaugurated a discourse which placed APEC's "liberalisation agenda" as "irreconcilable" with "genuine development", i.e., development which "affirm[s] the fundamental civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of individuals and peoples, and the obligations of states to

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<sup>105</sup> 'Statement from 1995 NGO Forum on APEC', reproduced in *AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, 26, no. 4 (1996), 18.

promote and protect such rights.”<sup>106</sup> The Statement also singles out the particularities of APEC’s terminology, i.e., member ‘economies’, as enabling the marginalization of non-economic issues and as leading to an unaccountable, untransparent, and “totally anti-democratic” process.<sup>107</sup>

In the Kyoto Statement, ‘genuine development’ occupies the place of a nodal point in the discourse. In other words, it is the point which is placed in direct opposition to APEC’s discourse as well as being the point around which gravitate other NGO discourses found in the Statement such as the one on human rights, the environment, labour rights, and on the preservation of traditional indigenous agricultural practices. In contraposition to genuine development, the NGO Statement views APEC’s discourse as being “socially unjust and ecologically unsustainable” since “it imposes irreversible social and environments costs; and it enables governments to abdicate their responsibilities to their citizens and leave them at the mercy of transnational corporations and international financial institutions who are accountable to no one.”<sup>108</sup> The basis of the antagonism which has marked the APEC/ NGO relation since the first internationally organized conference in 1995 is thus revealed in the conference Statement. APEC’s view of the world is envisioned as the fundamental impediment or barrier to the fulfilment of the NGO vision of the world, in this case genuine development and all this notion is meant to embody. The opposition stems from the manner in which APEC’s discourse occupies the place of that which impedes the self completion of the NGO discourse on genuine development. As the Statement proclaims, “[t]he APEC liberalisation

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 18.

agenda is *irreconcilable* with these goals [i.e., those of genuine development].”<sup>109</sup> This is where the understanding of the notion of antagonism developed in this thesis becomes useful in explaining why NGOs would have chosen APEC as a site of opposition. APEC’s discourse, or more precisely APEC’s discourse on the social, its description of the world, is envisioned as an obstruction denying the full realization of the subject positions voiced by NGOs. In this sense, APEC’s discourse is constructed as an ‘other’ subverting the NGO vision of the world or its view of genuine development.

The Statement concludes with twelve ‘demands’ addressed to the governments of APEC as well as three recommendations for the future of organized NGO opposition. The recommendations are significant to the extent that they seek to be foundational, attempting to inaugurate the future of organized opposition.<sup>110</sup> There is thus a performativity involved in the recommendations for future ‘People’s Summits’ by making recommendations to something which does not yet exist. The demands on the other hand are to be read as the elements of what genuine development would entail. They are very broad and include: promoting sustainable development through regional interstate cooperation; increasing transparency and the participation of people; rejecting unregulated liberalisation of trade and investment; raising environmental standards; eliminating the arms trade and promoting peace and disarmament; promoting ecologically sound energy consumption; ratifying and implementing all major labour and human rights agreements; imposing constraints and a code of conduct on multinational corporations; recognising food security

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid. (emphasis added).

<sup>110</sup> The three recommendations to NGOs are: “take our own initiatives to facilitate economic co-operation among the people; document the consequences of economic and trade liberalisation on the people, environment; and strengthen solidarity networks for resisting injustice and promoting positive economic and social change.” Ibid., 19.

as a human right; protecting indigenous farmers and land rights; protecting biodiversity; and protecting the rights of women and migrant workers. The way the demands are structured reveals two important aspects of the NGO discourse. First, all the demands are made in the name of the ‘people’.<sup>111</sup> Thus, the NGOs name themselves unproblematically as representatives of the voice of the people or civil society understood to be divorced from the state. The imaginary of the ‘people’ is used as an anchor point to which NGOs can attach their legitimacy and give weight to their views. And second, from the standpoint of civil society, the demands are addressed specifically to the member states of APEC rather than to APEC itself. Ironically therefore, in its envisioning of what genuine development would entail, the discourse of NGOs as it is articulated through the Kyoto Statement and its concluding demands reproduce the dominant imaginary of the modern practice of politics. The state remains the locus for politics, both nationally and internationally insofar as it is the final arbiter and the only legal authority capable of implementing genuine development. The paradox of course, is that the opening paragraphs of the Statement identify the agenda that APEC members were promoting as ‘irreconcilable’ with genuine development. Thus, what began as an accomplice to the threat to genuine development is now located as the final, or at least the necessary intermediary for the implementation of their vision. In the end, the Kyoto Statement tends to reproduce that which enables the terrain from where NGOs become a possibility, i.e., the civil society/ state dichotomy, and (re)locates the practice of politics at the level of the state. For the most part, therefore, the contestation can be located at the level of meaning. In other words, what is being contested is the specific chain of equivalences between politics (the state) and economics that APEC articulates which tends to privilege a limited understanding economics over the elements of genuine

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<sup>111</sup> Refer to quote on page 238.

development identified in the Statement. Thus, the NGO discourse through its Statement has the tone of a counter discourse seeking to articulate an alternative discursive vision (through the nodal point of genuine development) to that of APEC while remaining committed to the modern practice of politics by locating the latter at the level of the state for national policy and at the level of interstate cooperation for international policy.<sup>112</sup> All the demands coincide with this frame.

Where the NGO discourse may actually involve a more profound *political* contestation is revealed by the charge that APEC and its discourse is ‘totally anti-democratic’. The Statement reads:

Economic issues cannot be divorced from the complex realities of people’s daily lives. Yet APEC is described as a *community of economies* which bears no responsibility for social, political or cultural consequences of the decisions its members make. *This artificial distinction allows the APEC process to operate in a totally anti-democratic, unaccountable and untransparent way.*<sup>113</sup>

This is a more important contestation of the modern practice of politics which has occulted the possibility of deterritorializing democracy by defining democracy territorially. It is an indictment of an unaccountable and untransparent structure of global governance. Contrary to the other elements of opposition in the Statement, the charge that APEC is anti-democratic because it is unaccountable and untransparent (a fact reinforced by APEC’s particular terminology for its members, i.e., community of ‘*economies*’) is something which goes beyond a mere contestation of

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<sup>112</sup> Indeed, specific reference is made to the fact that the agenda pursued by governments in APEC are contradicting international commitments made elsewhere. The Statement reads: “We note with particular concern that member governments of APEC have participated in inter-governmental conferences on the rights of the child (New York), the environment (Rio), human rights (Vienna), population and development (Cairo), social development (Copenhagen), and Women (Beijing). Despite their participation, none of the commitments made in those conferences is viable in the APEC process. Rather, the consequences of this form of economic and trade liberalisation violate the fundamental rights to which they agreed.” Ibid., 18.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 19 (emphasis added).

meaning. Here, the antagonism raises questions at the level of the political since the NGO discourse is contesting the interstate imaginary which eclipses the possibility of democratizing beyond the level of the state. APEC and its particular language is envisioned as something which prohibits access to democracy, or more specifically, the democratic imaginary of ‘accountability’ and ‘transparency’, as the Statement asserts. Thus, there is a contestation of what appears as determined structures, an interstate world, where beyond state boundaries democracy is obscured. I would suggest that this is more than just an attack on APEC’s discourse. It represents a contestation of the political foundation of an interstate world from which international organizations are built along with the inside/ outside or national/ international boundaries this imaginary carries. However small, it does discursively open the possibility of genuinely new forms of politics and brings to the fore the possibility opened by the oppositional discourse of the parallel forums: a deterritorialization of democracy.

### ***The Manila People’s Forum on APEC (1996)***

Perhaps because of the tradition of social protest,<sup>114</sup> the antagonism in the APEC/ NGO relation was accentuated in 1996 when the Philippine government hosted the annual leaders’ meeting. In fact, several separate civil society platforms shadowed the official APEC meetings in November, with the most significant of these being the Manila People’s Forum on APEC, the successor to the International NGO Conference on APEC in Kyoto. With over 500 delegates and just under 200 foreign participants from 29 countries the Manila People’s Forum attracted increased

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<sup>114</sup> Gerard Clarke, *The Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia: Participation and Protest in the Philippines* (London: Routledge, 1998). Clarke provides a detail analysis of the history of NGO protest in the Philippines.

participation (including a final protest caravan with an estimated 10,000 people) as well as considerable international coverage.<sup>115</sup> Along with the four pre-forums (people's rights and democratization; labour and migrant rights; economic and social development; and ecology and environment), the People's Forum also hosted the first International Women's Conference on APEC as a pre-conference.<sup>116</sup> This reflected a broadening of the scope of opposition to APEC. Like its predecessor in Kyoto, the Manila People's Forum concluded its gatherings with a Declaration also adding a relatively detailed Plan of Action which contained demands, resolutions, and objectives formulated during the pre-forums and pre-conference as well as during the conference itself.<sup>117</sup>

Aside from the People's Forum, two smaller NGO initiatives, the People's Conference on Imperialist Globalisation and the International Subic Conference on APEC, also shadowed the official APEC meetings in 1996.<sup>118</sup> These two forums took a more militant stance by adopting an anti-imperialist discourse framed within a more forceful rejection of economic

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<sup>115</sup> In part, the increased international coverage stems from the fact that one of the keynote speakers, José Ramos Horta, the Timorese Nobel Peace prize laureate, was denied an entry visa by the Philippine government most likely in order to appease the then Indonesian president Suharto.

<sup>116</sup> In response to the increasing protest by women's groups, APEC members tried to incorporate gender on its agenda. In October 1998, APEC held its first ministerial meeting on women. A critical evaluation of APEC's efforts is provided by the Philippine Women's Forum on APEC (PWFA), a network of NGOs and women's groups which emerged from the Manila People's Forum on APEC. See Philippine Women's Forum on APEC, 'Philippine Women Taking on APEC and Globalization: Critical Papers by the Philippine Women's Forum on APEC' (Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Women's Forum on APEC care of WomanHealth Philippines, undated).

<sup>117</sup> Manila People's Forum on APEC 1996, 'Manila Declaration and Plan of Action' (Manila, Philippines, 21-24 November, 1996).

<sup>118</sup> A fourth NGO initiative called the Asia Pacific Sustainable Development Initiative was put together by a group which was initially working within the Manila People's Forum but subsequently decided to work with the Philippine government in the hopes of influencing the official agenda of APEC. See Bello and Bullard, 'APEC and the Environment', 49-50.

globalization.<sup>119</sup> The stronger militancy voiced by these two forums marked the beginning of a new feature of organized opposition to APEC which would to a certain degree shadow the larger ‘People’s Summits’ in Vancouver and Malaysia. More intransigent in its rejection of APEC, the ‘anti-imperialist’ position tended to mirror a Marxist-Leninist view of international capital and its use of the state and international organizations to “further subjugate and exploit the toiling masses and peoples of the world”.<sup>120</sup> In its envisioning of APEC as an instrument of ‘monopoly capital’ and economic globalization, there is no room for agonism in this particular version of the ‘anti-imperialist’ struggle against APEC. APEC is envisioned as part of the capitalist structure which is the ‘enemy’, an enemy against which the ‘people’ must struggle.<sup>121</sup> In contradistinction to the Kyoto conference therefore, the Declarations do not formulate demands and recommendations addressed to APEC governments. Rather, in a manner of speaking they ‘preach to the converted’ and call upon them to educate the “oppressed”.<sup>122</sup> In this sense, the Declarations are framed by an us/ them dichotomy which offers no possibility for agonism, and this occults the possibility of deterritorializing agonistic democracy. They tend to resolve the self/ other problématique in a strong

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<sup>119</sup> ‘Declaration of the People’s Conference Against Imperialist Globalization’ (Quezon City, Philippines, November 21-23, 1996), and ‘The International Subic Conference on APEC: The Social Cost of Globalization’, (Preda Center, Subic, Olongapo City Philippines, November 23-25, 1996).

<sup>120</sup> ‘Declaration of the People’s Conference Against Imperialist Globalization’, 3.

<sup>121</sup> As the “Declaration of the People’s Conference Against Imperialist Globalization’ states, the possibility of armed struggle is not foreclosed: ‘By its own rapacity and cupidity, monopoly capital is fast bringing together the world’s exploited and oppressed peoples to share their common pains as well as their common struggles and aspirations. In more and more countries, they are developing new means of struggle or taking up proven ones, including the revolutionary recourse to armed struggle. Having resisted and survived state reaction and brutal repression, the people are resolved to win.’ Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> “We affirm [...] the imperative for the empowerment of oppressed people through education and organizing, and the oppressed people’s struggle for their liberation.” See ‘The International Subic Conference on APEC: The Social Cost of Globalization’, 48b.

modern tone, and do not allow space for an agonistic pluralism.

The Declaration of the Manila People's Forum on the other hand took a different tack even though at times it does deploy a view of economic globalization and transnational corporations which mimics the anti-imperialist stance. The Declaration begins by reaffirming the Kyoto Statement and thereby performatively establishes its link to the history of organized opposition to APEC.<sup>123</sup> Doing so tends to retroactively inaugurate the Kyoto Conference *as* history, i.e., as *the* history of organized NGO opposition to APEC. The Declaration ends with a call to the future by briefly outlining what are to be the themes for the 1997 People's Summit on APEC in Vancouver.<sup>124</sup> Anchoring the Declaration to the past and to the future performatively creates a continuity in time and space for NGO opposition to APEC and contributes to give to the parallel forum the appearance of presence, of a fixed structured reality, meant to be similar to that of APEC. This fulfills an important function of the Declaration, i.e., to act as a founding document which also means giving foundation to the NGO parallel forums. This call to the past and the future are important features of the *political* attempt at laying ground and establishing the contours of the opposition.

Unlike its predecessor, the Manila Declaration gives more attention to establishing the contours of its alternative vision. In a sense, it seeks to give more detailed or complete meaning to what the Kyoto Statement had identified as 'genuine development'. This is made evident by the

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<sup>123</sup> The Manila Declaration reads: "Reaffirming the historic Kyoto Declaration of November 1995, we have gathered in Manila as representatives of people's movements, women's movements; trade unions, non-governmental and religious organizations from 29 nations of Asia, Pacific, the Americas and Europe." Manila People's Forum on APEC 1996, 'Manila Declaration and Plan of Action', 1.

<sup>124</sup> The Declaration states: "We have established an ambitious program of research and mobilization to prepare for the next phase of our work in developing liveable and sustainable alternatives to market-driven globalization based on the principles of democracy, equality and social justice. We will meet next year in Vancouver to continue this effort." *Ibid.*, 5.

pre-conference focussing on gender as well as the four pre-forums concentrating on people's rights and democratization, labour and migrant rights, economic and social development, and ecology and environment. The Manila Declaration is divided into sections which reproduces these themes with a final section entitled Governance and the Role of the State. The widening of issues at Manila highlights the tension between the need to formulate a pluralist and inclusive standpoint among the NGO community, while also seeking to establish a consensual terrain demarcating the contours of the alternative vision which subsequently can be counterposed to APEC. The Declaration acknowledges that this work of defining an alternative vision necessarily entails giving answers to questions of identity, which while meant to be inclusive, must in the end establish boundaries in order to delimit the consensus for the alternative vision.

This paper is submitted, not in conclusion, but to suggest a beginning. It serves to examine who we are, to define our vision, and to suggest how these ends can be achieved. Let us make no illusions about our diversity of views. Rather let us affirm our commitment to genuine regional co-operation that is not based on a paradigm of naked economic liberalization.<sup>125</sup>

Thus, not only does the Declaration and Plan of Action involve defining an alternative vision to APEC (one which is meant to include the issues that APEC's discourse on the social occults), it also entails defining the identity of NGOs, as well as the contours of the civil society movement that opposes APEC. Implicit boundaries are being established between acceptable and unacceptable NGO opposition. As the above quote elucidates, defining a vision includes defining an 'us' and a 'them' among NGOs. The fact that 1996 was marked by several NGO parallel forums which were unable to reunite under one banner is indicative of the limits of the pluralist aspirations of the NGO

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 6.

discourse.<sup>126</sup> These limits would continue to be tested by the ‘anti-imperialist’ elements within organized NGO opposition both in Vancouver and Malaysia. Within this context, the Manila Declaration is a political discourse which delimits the terrain of what is the ‘legitimate’ opposition to APEC. Both the link to the past and the call to the future in the Declaration work at establishing the boundaries of legitimacy.

Like the Kyoto Statement, the Manila Declaration seeks to contest the vision APEC deploys through its practice of politics. The contestation revolves predominantly around the narrowness of the “APEC process of global economic integration” seen to be only at the service of the “corporate agenda”.<sup>127</sup> The fact that 1996 was the year that APEC coined its slogan ‘APEC means business’ highlighted the predominant place occupied by business within APEC’s structure and made it more prominent as a point of antagonism. The Declaration contests the narrowness of APEC’s agenda because it contends that this narrowness is accomplished at the “expense of human rights, dignity and well being of the peoples of this region.”<sup>128</sup> Through the themes of the pre-forums and pre-conference, in effect the Manila People’s Forum is suggesting what issues governments should include on APEC’s agenda, i.e., gender, economic and social development, human and people’s rights, governance and the role of the state, labour and migrant rights, and ecology and the environment. There is also an important contestation of the securitization and insidious forms of state repression which have accompanied the APEC meetings. More specifically, the Declaration

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<sup>126</sup> As was suggested by Bello and Bullard, the predominant line of demarcation between NGOs that became apparent in 1995 and 1996 can be summarized as “to engage or not to engage?” See Bello and Bullard, ‘APEC and the Environment’, 49-52.

<sup>127</sup> ‘Manila Declaration and Plan of Action’, 1.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

expresses outrage at the Philippine government's demolition of thousands of urban poor homes as well as the use of various scare tactics geared towards stifling descent.<sup>129</sup>

In terms of possible openings for a deterritorialization of agonistic democracy, the Declaration offers a number of contradictory moments. The majority of the Declaration follows the Kyoto Statement by addressing its protest and demands to the traditional level of politics: the state and its representatives. And it is through the imaginary of the modern practice of politics that democracy is envisioned. The end of the introduction to the Declaration sets the tone for this envisioning.

We call, [...] on all governments participating in the APEC 'summit' to fulfill the democratic mandate to secure justice, preserve the dignity and advance the economic, social and cultural well-being of all the people, and protect the natural heritage for our children's children.<sup>130</sup>

The chain of equivalence that is drawn between the fulfilment of the democratic mandate and the state is apparent. Drawing this equivalence obviously confronts the NGO discourse with the fact that many APEC governments are hardly 'democratic' as it is conventionally understood. As such, calling upon them to fulfill a democratic mandate when they have not been mandated democratically is indeed problematic. This confronts NGOs with the limits of the modern practice of politics centred around an interstate imaginary which spatializes democracy, allowing the 'legitimate' coexistence of democratic and undemocratic spaces within the same international organization. Most of the other sections of the Declaration which touch upon the various themes

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<sup>129</sup> According to one Philippino NGO, BAYAN (New Patriotic Alliance), security preparations for the APEC meetings included some 50,000 soldiers and police creating a strongly militarized environment. Thousands of people lost their homes to demolition crews which were eliminating 'eyesores' in and around Manila. BAYAN, 'Repression Escalates as APEC Summit Nears' (Document released by BAYAN, 3 November 1996).

<sup>130</sup> 'Manila Declaration and Plan of Action', 2.

mentioned earlier follow this understanding of democracy and its relation to the modern practice of politics since they consistently address themselves to the member governments of APEC. The same can be said for the detailed Action Plan produced by the four pre-forums and the Women's Conference which accompanies the People's Declaration. The eighteen page Action Plan is divided into sections which reflect the themes of the conference: gender, people's rights and democratization, labour and migrant rights, economic and social development, and ecology and environment with a final section on governance and the role of the state. Aside from the last section on governance and the role of the state, each theme section is arranged into two broad categories: recommendations for NGO action, and demands for governments.<sup>131</sup> As such, the way the contestation is organized in the Action Plan tends to focus and relocate democratic struggle within the traditional realm of the state by addressing demands to APEC member governments.

Where we find significant ambiguity in the Declaration's reading of democracy (as well as in the Plan of Action) is in the section titled Governance and the Role of the State. Here, we find a similar discursive opening to the one I located in the Kyoto Statement.

Since its inception, APEC has deliberately conducted its agenda in an antidemocratic manner without transparency, accountability, or popular participation. This is symptomatic of the underlying neo-liberal model, which seeks to transfer power from states to markets. The resulting lack of democracy is manifested in all levels of the policies and practices of APEC- subsuming states to the directives of business advisory bodies, corporations, and international financial institutions. [...] What is urgently needed now is a strategy to mobilize democratic forces against the arbitrary power of states, corporations and policy bureaucracies and their economic institutions, including APEC.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> 'Plan of Action: Manila People's Forum on APEC 1996', 7-23.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 3. A similar tone is found in the section on Governance and the Role of the State in the Action Plan. Indeed, of the nine statements in this section of the Action Plan the first six are worth quoting in their entirety: "We call on people's organizations and NGOs to [1] Establish a comprehensive educational program for people's organizations and non-governmental organizations on the policies and practices of APEC and the WTO to encourage public

Most other areas of the Declaration (re)territorialize democracy by addressing the demands and grievance to APEC member governments. And this view of democracy greatly outweighs the instance in the Declaration where democracy is envisioned otherwise. Thus, openings for deterritorializing the democratic imaginary are few. However, in the above quote democracy is expanded beyond its traditional boundaries. By accusing APEC of being antidemocratic, the Declaration assigns to an international organisation something which has been absent from the imaginary of an interstate world where the democratic experience has traditionally not exceeded the boundaries enforced by this imaginary. In effect, the NGO discourse as it is articulated through the Declaration is calling for an expansion of the democratic imaginary beyond its spatialized form. As such, there is a correspondence being drawn between the historical experience of territorialized democracy and the symbolic ordering from which this experience is enabled. It is the possibility of drawing this equivalence which allows the Declaration to transgress the territorial boundaries of the democratic imaginary and consequently accuse APEC of being untransparent, unaccountable,

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understanding and promote debate and the development of effective responses to these processes; [2] Monitor and document the effects of the new trade and investment regime on their governments and societies especially in terms of their capacity to determine their own interests and priorities towards development; [3] Investigate the extent to which the structural and political processes associated with APEC impinge on questions of sovereignty, noting that 'national sovereignty' should be distinguished from 'people's sovereignty' where the former conventionally represents state interests exclusively and often to the detriment of a broader notion of popular, democratic values; [4] To explore all arenas and modes of resistance to the damaging effects of unfettered state-corporate power. This includes: a) the promotion of 'responsible investment'; b) the use of national and international law to expose and challenge unlawful actions and activities of governments and corporations; c) political lobbying; d) demand to the UN Special Rapporteur on Social, Cultural and Political Rights to examine the impact of the WTO in the globalization process; [5] To advance the role of civil society vis-a-vis the state and corporations in the determination of economic policy co-ordination in order to promote increased democratic accountability and good governance. Create counter-hegemonic institutions and coalitions by mobilizing existing people's organizations and NGO networks to contest the present APEC-WTO agenda and in formulating strategic policy alternatives. This should include cross-sectoral networking with dialogue at all levels from grassroots through national and regional groupings to the international community; [6] Create structures to monitor and educate with a view to creating counter hegemonic institutions and coalitions of transnational cross sectoral networking; [...]" Ibid., 23. These statements tend to problematize the state as the appropriate site of democratic contestation while focusing on other levels of politics, including APEC.

and inaccessible to popular participation. Without this equivalence, the NGO would not have access to the possibility of accusing APEC of being antidemocratic.

This equivalence between democracy territorialized and democracy as a symbolic ordering of social relations exceeding territory also allows the Declaration to transgress other boundaries which increasingly inform the modern practice of politics. More specifically, it allows the Declaration to challenge the manner in which neo-liberalism has envisioned the relationship between the public and the private which follows the reshaping of the interface between politics and economics. As we saw in Chapters One and Three, this reshaping of politics and economics is mirrored in what has come to be known as the ‘Washington Consensus’, a version of which is articulated through APEC’s discourse on the social. For most, the result of this reshaping is to place politics (or the public sphere) in subservience to economics (or the private sphere). As the private becomes increasingly privileged by the practice of politics, what is allowed as the space for the public domain tends to be tapered. In calling for a mobilisation of democratic forces against what is seen as the arbitrary or unaccountable power of the state as well as corporations, bureaucracies, and international organizations such as APEC (as the previous quote mentions), the NGO discourse is manifestly rejecting this move. In so doing, it is rejecting what is meant by ‘the public sphere’ in the practice of politics put forth by the neo-liberal discourse echoed in APEC. In contesting this meaning however, the NGO discourse also pushes the boundaries of what appears as determined structure separating the public from the private and politics from economics. It pushes these boundaries to the extent that its call for mobilisation advocates holding accountable that which, aside from the state, tends to fall outside of democratic accountability. The democratic imaginary is expanded beyond its traditional boundaries; both the boundaries which separate the inside from

the outside as well as those that separate the public from the private and politics from economics.

### *The 1997 People's Summit on APEC (Vancouver)*

The People's Summit in Vancouver continued to expand NGO opposition to APEC. Increased levels of popular participation as well as new issues gave the People's Summit an even broader focus than the previous years. Over 3,000 people attended some fifteen issue forums and roughly 700 people were formally registered for the People's Summit itself with participants coming from over 40 countries.<sup>133</sup> Notable participants included José Ramos Horta who had been denied entry into the Philippines and was unable to attend the Manila People's Forum the previous year. New topics for issue forums included APEC's corporate agenda; free markets and their effects on the openness of the media; public education; indigenous peoples; and a peasant's roundtable. Some of the pre-Summit events included numerous protest activities which were held throughout the year; an Asia-Pacific People's Parliament on APEC in Montréal which produced a Charter of People's Rights; a five day youth forum on APEC; a Domestic Workers Conference; and the Second International Women's Conference Against APEC itself bringing together some 500 delegates.<sup>134</sup> Fifty-five NGOs (the vast majority of which were based in Canada) participated in various degrees in organizing the main Summit over five days.<sup>135</sup> The Summit ended with a protest march by some

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<sup>133</sup> Price, 'Shadowing APEC', 33-34.

<sup>134</sup> The 1997 People's Summit on APEC, 'Daily Summit Communiqué', Issue no. 6 (November 18, 1997). Other notable events which took place prior to the official APEC meeting was the Asia-Pacific Meeting on APEC in September 1997 organized by the Public Service International (PSI), and the annual Asia-Pacific Labour Network meeting in Ottawa held one month later in October. On these events see Price, 'Shadowing APEC', 32-33.

<sup>135</sup> On the list of NGOs involved in organizing the summit see People's Summit Secretariat, *The 1997 People's Summit on APEC: Proceedings* (Vancouver: People's Summit Secretariat, undated), 80-81.

4,500 people as well as a second march by 2,000 people (mostly students) two days latter.<sup>136</sup> This second march was not directly related to Summit activities but did gain significant media coverage. It was this second march, repeatedly seen on television, where Canadians witnessed members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) use pepper spray on mostly student protestors from the University of British Columbia. Other NGO activity apart from the People's Summit included a No to APEC! coalition which mirrored the two anti-imperialist forums held the previous year in the Philippines, as well as a student based APEC Alert Network which was propelled into the media spot light when one of its lead organizers later became a central figure in the internal inquiry launched by the RCMP into the handling of protestors. As noted at the beginning of Chapter Four, as in the case of previous APEC meetings, Vancouver witnessed various forms of police repression ranging from the more serious use of pepper spray on student protestors to removal of protest signs and the limitation of protest areas. This would lead to the lengthy internal inquiry of police conduct during the APEC leaders meeting.<sup>137</sup> As such, the securitization which accompanies APEC annual meeting of heads of state and which contributes to limiting the breadth of opposition continue to be a point of antagonism around which the APEC/ NGO relation is defined.

In contrast to the previous parallel forums, the People's Summit did not produce a final declaration or statement. Instead, what was offered was a one page Preamble to all the final reports of the various issue forums and pre-summit events. The fact that a Preamble rather than a declaration was the chosen format is indicative of a stronger and more explicit attempt than in

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<sup>136</sup> See Price, 'Shadowing APEC', 34 and Jeff Sallot, 'Human-Rights Protest Noisy but Non-Violent', *The Globe and Mail* (Wednesday, November 26, 1997), A8.

<sup>137</sup> The inquiry was still ongoing at the time of writing.

previous forums to offer a pluralist discourse in which the objective was to preserve the outcome of the increased variety of subject positions at the Summit. Rather than subvert the plurality and difference of these voices and force the reconciliation needed to create a final declaration, the idea behind the Preamble was to let the multitude of subject positions represented at the pre-summit events and the issue forums speak for themselves.<sup>138</sup> In this sense, the tone that was sought was that of a celebration of difference and diversity.<sup>139</sup> However, the Preamble was also the site where there was an effort made to identify the common threads that unite these voices. As such, the Preamble attempted to navigate the tension located between the necessity of establishing the contours of a consensual terrain of opposition to APEC while maintaining the broadness of the inclusive standpoint the parallel forums have sought to create for themselves as the true voice(s) of the 'people'. Indeed, it is this very broadness which is seen as the foundation for the NGO forums since it is placed in contraposition to APEC's narrowness. The broadness and inclusiveness become defining points of the parallel forums. The effort to articulate this identity while also seeking to find a common ground is made evident by the opening paragraph of the Preamble.

It has become manifestly clear that trade liberalization has had destructive consequences for the vast majority of people and the environment. The voices of people's movements, women's movements, workers' movements, peasants' movements, youth movements, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, churches, environmental groups, human rights groups and concerned individuals, are

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<sup>138</sup> A 'preface' to the Preamble reads: "This preamble was created by the participants at the 1997 People's Summit on APEC. The results of the Issue Forums, which met as part of the Summit, are to be attached to this preamble. Individuals and organizations were invited to sign on to the statement at the time of and/ or the time following the Summit." See People's Summit on APEC, *The 1997 People's Summit on APEC: Proceedings*, 15.

<sup>139</sup> In part, this meant added attention to the participation of delegates from Third World countries. Funds totaling 130,000 Canadian dollars were used to assist 46 foreign delegates travel to Canada for Summit activities. See Price, 'Shadowing APEC', 32. These efforts were not without criticism however. Some accused the Summit organizers of not providing sufficient attention to Canada's indigenous peoples. See notably Aziz Choudry, 'Leather Jackets and Liar's Scrawl- APEC', *The Big Picture*, no. 13 (February, 1998).

united in firm opposition to the impact of government implemented, corporate-driven globalization and have predicted its devastating effects.<sup>140</sup>

In one breath, the Preamble significantly extends the number of subject positions beyond that of any previous NGO forum on APEC while at the same time limiting the focus of opposition to ‘corporate-driven globalization’ and to the governments which implement it. The consensual terrain needed to formulate a counter discourse to APEC forces the pluralist discourse of NGOs to find the limits of its respect for difference when a unity must be proclaimed. This claim to unity unveils the unavoidable political move of the NGO discourse. The claim to unity, the need for an ‘us’ counterposed to the ‘them’ of APEC, no matter how broad the ‘us’, tends to force a compression of difference and arrests the pluralist impulse of the NGO discourse by anchoring it to a point meant to be common to all subject positions. The point around which a unity is assumed to gravitate is the economic to the extent that the object around which opposition is united is the ‘malevolent’ agency of corporations and their government brokers. The economic is the foundation from which all the different voices are compressed into the same. It is proclaimed to be the common ground from which can be launched a united opposition to APEC’s discourse. As such, the claim to unity, which is the necessary *political* move of the counter discourse, subverts the pluralist impulse at the heart of the Preamble. It must do so to counterpose itself to APEC. The attempt of the Preamble to let the voices speak for themselves in the end must force a reconciliation of the multitude of voices by claiming that they all oppose APEC for the same reason, and that the basis of their opposition despite their difference is the same. This assumes that all the multiple voices are, in the final instance, primarily determined or constructed by the economic terrain of human being. Whether

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<sup>140</sup> People’s Summit on APEC, *The 1997 People’s Summit on APEC: Proceedings*, 15.

it be women's movements, indigenous peoples, environmental groups or human rights groups, it is believed that their defining feature revolves around the nodal point of the economic.

The significance of this is that it tends to qualify the progressive quality of the politics of the NGO discourse. It also reveals how the NGO discourse is itself *political* which tends to alleviate the view that the parallel forums are outside of its realm because they, unlike official APEC which is seen as only catering to corporations, are the "real Summit, the People's Summit".<sup>141</sup> As with the views in IT explored at the beginning of this chapter, the belief that the inherent progressive quality of civil society movements escapes the political does not take into account the manner in which the NGO discourse is engaged in creating boundaries. The need to establish these boundaries follows from the attempt to create an alternative vision of the world. However, in contradistinction to APEC's discourse the NGO discourse in creating boundaries is obviously more problematic since parallel forums seek to construct a pluralist identity and are sensitive to identity/difference. Engaging discursively with APEC confronts the NGO discourse with the limits of its identity. It confronts these limits because it reconciles the self/ other, universal/ particular in manners which tend to undermine the pluralist impulse of the voice of the people.

The Preamble goes on to list a series of points which further unite the voices of the People's Summit. The first of these reiterates the position held by two previous large scale NGO forums on APEC. It does so by reaffirming a rejection of "the basic philosophy, framework and assumptions of the model of free trade and trade liberalization implemented by governments through the APEC process, as well as through the WTO, the OECD and established trade agreements

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<sup>141</sup> Speech given at the opening ceremonies of the People's Summit by Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians. Reproduced in People's Summit on APEC, *The 1997 People's Summit on APEC: Proceedings*, 11.

throughout the world.”<sup>142</sup> In lieu APEC’s model, the Preamble reasserts the notion of genuine development which was deployed two years prior in the Kyoto Statement while significantly expanding the scope of its meaning. It asserts that genuine development:

[...] must be based on the universality of human rights and gender equity; must be centred on the needs of people and nature, realize social and economic justice, especially for peasants, fisher folk and migrant workers; respect internationally recognized labour rights, and ensure that all people, especially the most vulnerable such as women, children, indigenous peoples and displaced peoples are secure in their basic rights to food, sources of subsistence, health and education, human dignity, integrity of communities, environmental security and self-determination.<sup>143</sup>

Following the general tendency of the People’s Summit to expand the breath of opposition to APEC, the meaning of genuine development in the Preamble is extended in order to offer the broadest possible counter position. New themes are appropriated, notably the notion that basic rights includes secure access to food, health, education, dignity, community, environment security, and self-determination. New emphasis is also placed on defending these rights for those most marginalized by the neo-liberal discourse echoed in APEC. Thus, the Preamble not only broadens the range of subject positions opposed to APEC it also broadens the terrain of opposition to the meaning deployed by APEC’s discourse on the social. This has the effect of strengthening the accusation that APEC’s discourse is too narrow since it is now seen as excluding an even more extensive range of issues and people. As such, the identity of the parallel NGO forums as it was articulated in Vancouver was significantly broadened.

As with the Kyoto Statement and the Manila Declaration, the Preamble focuses the primary responsibility for the practice of politics of APEC not on the organization itself but on the

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>143</sup> People’s Summit on APEC, *The 1997 People’s Summit on APEC: Proceedings*, 15.

member governments. Indeed, not only is this true for the Preamble itself, it is also the general tendency throughout the reports issued by the pre-summit events as well as the issue forums which the Preamble is meant to introduce. On a number of occasions emphasis is placed on the fact that APEC's agenda is implemented by its member governments and that consequently the true responsibility for the effects of internationally organized trade and investment liberalization is to be assigned to governments and their policies.<sup>144</sup> Throughout the Preamble there is an explicit effort to relocate the practice of politics both national and international at the level of the state. As such, the possibility of deterritorializing democracy is generally obscured in favour of relocating politics along with the democratic imaginary at its traditional source. While this had also been the dominant tendency in the Kyoto Statement and the Manila Declaration, there was nevertheless a discursive opening which seized on what the parallel forums could potentially articulate: a deterritorialization of democracy. At the People's Summit however, this possibility is occulted by an attempt to place responsibility on what is seen as the true culprits of globalization, states and their corporate backers. In terms of the democratic imaginary, an inside/ outside dichotomy is favoured over the possibility of deterritorializing democracy.

### ***The Asia Pacific People's Assembly (Kuala Lumpur, 1998)***

In November 1998, while the social and political effects of the Asian economic crisis

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<sup>144</sup> The Preamble states: "[...] we the participants at the 1997 Vancouver People's Summit on APEC, building upon the declarations from Kyoto and Manila, raise our voices again, to: [...] demand that governments, in fulfilling their responsibility for human rights, accept their responsibility for the harmful impact of the neo-liberal model of trade which is evident throughout Asia and the Pacific, especially in Southeast Asia, and in the visible devastation of peoples and their environment throughout the region; end authoritarian and militaristic rule; regulate corporate activities; commit to the implementation of a participatory, emancipatory model of economic and social development, and commit to the realization of accountable, democratic governance, all of which is in line with the diverse recommendations of the Issue Forums of this Summit." Ibid.

were still being felt, NGOs organized their activities in Malaysia to coincide with the sixth meeting of APEC leaders in Kuala Lumpur. Organizing in Malaysia was itself a significant accomplishment when one considers that at the time people were faced with renewed government efforts to stifle public dissent and crush demonstrations which had been sparked by the dismissal, and subsequent arrest and imprisonment of the former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim in September of 1998. In the months leading up to the Peoples' Assembly, those opposing publicly the government through mass rallies and calls for democratization under the banner of *reformasi* faced severe state repression.<sup>145</sup> It is within this anti-democratic context that more than 600 people, some of which were representing a total of 316 NGOs based in 30 countries, gathered in Kuala Lumpur for the Asia Pacific Peoples' Assembly under the theme of Confronting Globalization: Reasserting Peoples' Rights!<sup>146</sup> The theme reflected an important shift in the stated focus of opposition which, while still concentrated on APEC, was more explicit about placing the latter within the broader context of what was seen as the ill effects of "neo-liberal globalization".<sup>147</sup> Following the People's Summit in Vancouver, the Peoples' Assembly was ordered around several issue and sector forums which included: Community Enterprises for Sustainable Livelihood; Forum on Land, Food Security and Agriculture; Environment and Forestry Forum; Human Rights Forum; Indigenous Peoples' Forum;

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<sup>145</sup> The most notable of these mass rallies was the one which preceded Anwar's arrest. Some 30,000 people gathered in the Merdeka Square on September 20, 1998, the same place where Malaysian independence from British rule was declared in 1957. See John Stackhouse, 'Malaysian PM Cracks Down on Opposition', *The Globe and Mail* (Tuesday, September 22, 1998), A13.

<sup>146</sup> Asia Pacific Peoples' Assembly Secretariat, *The Asia Pacific Peoples' Assembly: Final Report* (Kuala Lumpur: APPA Secretariat, 1998), 5.

<sup>147</sup> The opening paragraph states: "We have come to confront the issue of globalisation, and in particular the APEC as an instrument to implement it, in order to strengthen our understanding and resistance, and reassert people's rights" *Ibid.*, 33. The document which accompanies the Unity Statement, the Adopted Resolutions of the Asia Pacific Peoples' Assembly, also reflects a move away from a direct opposition to APEC. None of the resolutions target APEC specifically. See *Ibid.*, 36-38.

Labour Forum; the 4<sup>th</sup> International Migrant Forum on APEC; Forum on Privatisation and Financial Deregulation; Asia Pacific Youth and Students Caucus; Urban Poor Forum; Round Table Discussion on US-Japan Militarist Agenda; Third Women's Conference Against APEC; and Forum on Education.<sup>148</sup>

The most notable outcome of the Peoples' Assembly for this thesis, however, was its Unity Statement.<sup>149</sup> More so than the previous statements and declarations issued by the parallel forums, the Peoples' Assembly Unity Statement was a more thorough attempt to establish the contours of opposition to APEC. Formulated over two days of plenary sessions the Unity Statement, to a certain degree, takes the opposite tack to the one which seemed prevalent at the previous forum in Vancouver. Rather than attempt to articulate a pluralist discourse in which the objective is to allow the various voices at the forum to speak for themselves, the Unity Statement engages in an effort to establish a consensus among the NGOs even though like Vancouver each issue forum had its own final report. This is not to say that the Unity Statement does not seek to give voice to a plurality of subject positions. In fact, much of the same range of voices that were articulated at the People's Summit in Vancouver can also be found here. Rather, the difference lies in the manner in which consensus on the basis of opposition and not pluralism is placed as the central component of the statement. This is made clear with the closing charge of the Statement which asserts that change can only come from "ourselves, our strength, our unity and determination."<sup>150</sup>

Within this context of seeking a consensus, two notable features mark the Unity

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 33-35.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 35.

Statement and contribute to distinguishing it from its predecessors. The first is a more militant stance in terms of rejecting APEC and globalization, and the second is the complete abandonment of formulating demands which are subsequently addressed to the member governments of APEC. This latter feature is reflected more specifically in the Adopted Resolutions of the Asia Pacific Peoples' Assembly. The more militant stance in the Unity Statement tends to mirror the anti-imperialist discourse which has shadowed the parallel NGO forums on APEC since 1996. In particular, the Statement locates globalization as an outcome of "monopoly capital" and its main agent transnational corporations.

Neo-liberal globalisation is the response of monopoly capital to the global crisis. Liberalisation and deregulation of markets and investments, and privatisation of public utilities and services have been imposed to expand TNC business and increase super-profits. Globalisation is being promoted through the myth of unlimited growth by giving free rein to business and the 'free' market.<sup>151</sup>

It goes on to affirm that through international organisations such as APEC, the state- business partnership reinforces monopoly capital's control over people's livelihood. To do this, "the state has been redesigned and its role manipulated in order to meet the demands of monopoly capital and the local ruling elite of big landowners and big business" which has had the effect of "divesting the state of its social responsibility."<sup>152</sup> Globalization as the outcome of the collusion between monopoly capital and a redesigned state is seen to have increased poverty and misery and has not achieved the promise of progress and increased employment put forth by "neo-liberal globalization".

However, far from its promise of jobs and progress, globalisation has resulted in widespread unemployment, displacement of peoples and destruction of their livelihoods, marginalisation of large sections of society, intensified discrimination

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 33.

and repression as well as the disintegration of families and communities. Far from its promise of development, globalisation has wrecked societies and the environment and financial systems. [...] It has brought peoples and countries to greater poverty and misery.<sup>153</sup>

The Unity Statement then asserts that globalization has had negative consequences for each of the subject positions articulated at the individual issue forums of the Peoples' Assembly. Highlighting these consequences for each of the subject positions becomes the central focus of the Unity Statement and takes up much of the remaining space. As such, for women, globalization is seen to reinforce patriarchy and exploitation both through the increased sex trade and the deterioration of working conditions. Peasants and fisherfolk are seen to have lost their traditional means of livelihood with the increasing concentration of agro-industry and large-scale commercial fishing in the hands of huge global corporations. Consequently, secure access to food for most of the population is being jeopardized. Globalization is viewed to have favoured increased urbanisation accentuating urban poverty and the displacement of people. The greater mobility of capital is seen to have severely compromised worker rights and has driven the massive migration of workers around the world increasing the precariousness of their lives. The Statement goes to affirm that youth and students are faced with an increased commercialisation of education which both limits accessibility and curriculum. Indigenous people, it is also argued, are denied self-determination and have lost much of their land to the exploitation of natural resources often by multinational corporations while indigenous cultures are being replaced by the globalization of a consumerist and individualist ideology. And finally, globalization is seen to have contributed to the destruction of the environment and the depletion of non-renewable resources. Within this context, the Unity

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

Statement concludes that:

The full realisation of the people's human rights should be the primary objective of economic arrangements. However, economic, political, civil, social and cultural rights are violated by the state and monopoly capital with impunity. As the people resist and assert their rights, they are met with violent suppression by the state. Under the guise of political stability, repressive laws, together with the control of the judiciary, tighten the grip of the state and promote dictatorship.<sup>154</sup>

Throughout the Unity Statement, globalization occupies the place of the 'other', that which impedes the self-completion of all the subject positions present of the Peoples' Assembly. Within this context, APEC gives a figure to this 'other' by representing the collusion between monopoly capital and the state. Much of the Unity Statement can be seen as seeking to explain the incommensurability between the subject positions of the NGOs and 'neo-liberal globalization'. The construction of the antagonism between the NGOs and APEC as a face of globalization is therefore, more forcefully drawn than in previous years.<sup>155</sup>

We vehemently resist globalisation as we struggle for equality, peoples' democratic rights and sovereignty, self determination, social justice, people-centred development and welfare. [We] fight to reverse neo-liberal globalisation and put an end to its policies of liberalisation and deregulation of trade and investment and privatisation of public assets and services.<sup>156</sup>

In constructing the antagonism, the discourse of NGOs, more than in the previous parallel forums, locates the state and by extension inter-state cooperation through APEC, as constitutive of the antagonism.<sup>157</sup> Consequently, nowhere in the Unity Statement do we find demands addressed to the

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>155</sup> In this light, the Statement calls for a "dismantling" of all the "instruments" of globalization such as APEC. Ibid., 35.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>157</sup> The Unity Statement declares that: "The TNCs must also be dismantled and the state must be challenged and their efforts to promote neo-liberal globalisation must be resisted and overcome." Ibid.

state since the latter occupies a central place in the articulation of the antagonism. This marks an important change in regards to the previous statements and declarations which while highly critical of APEC's agenda and the governments which seek to implement it nevertheless continued to address their demands at the traditional level of politics. Couching the Statement in an anti-imperialist discourse prohibits reproducing this feature of the past NGO forums because the traditional locus of the practice of politics is seen to be corrupted by its alliance with monopoly capital, both nationally and internationally. The antagonism is expressed in a manner which is more *antagonistic* than *agonistic*, and this disenables engaging with APEC. Within this context, the Unity Statement concludes by speaking to the 'we', i.e., those who oppose APEC and its brand of globalization rather than APEC's member governments. It calls upon this 'we' to reaffirm the universality and indivisibility of human rights, to develop information campaigns and education strategies geared towards promoting people centred alternatives, and to seek alliances and build solidarity with other social groups committed to "people's alternatives" and united in resisting globalization.

We reaffirm the universality and indivisibility of our rights as enshrined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and in various UN and ILO [the International Labour Organization] conventions. But these are not being enforced; they are being breached with impunity and states are not being made accountable. We assert our rights, forward the struggle and strengthen the people's movements. We must develop broad information campaigns and intensive education to promote people-centred actions, organise at all levels of oppressed communities and sectors and continue the resistance through creative political actions at the local and national level, as well as pursue community level alternatives. We seek different levels of alliances with different groups and build international solidarity to resist globalisation and realise the people's alternatives. <sup>158</sup>

By concluding in this manner, the Unity Statement reasserts that which is its primary focus: to claim

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 35.

a unity, a clear consensus on opposition to APEC and globalization. Without this claim there can be no 'we' to begin with.

What are the implications of the Unity Statement for the possibility of deterritorializing democracy? Both in the People's Summit on APEC in Vancouver and the Peoples' Assembly in Malaysia there is a tendency to obscure the possibility of disincorporating territory from the democratic imaginary. The People's Summit does so by reterritorializing democracy as an effect of seeking to locate the true responsibility for APEC's agenda at the level of its member governments. While the Peoples' Assembly does so by articulating the antagonism more in its antagonistic rather than agonistic form. As such, the last two parallel NGO forums on APEC did not push the antagonism contained in APEC's discourse on the social in a *political* direction which would deterritorialize democracy. In other words, they did not tend to challenge, destabilize, and render contingent what appears to be fix or determined structures of international relations which eclipse the possibility of deterritorizing the democratic imaginary.

### ***Conclusion***

In light of the fact that no large scale NGO forum was organized for the 1999 APEC leaders meeting in New Zealand and that the meeting for the year 2000 will be held in Brunei where opportunities to organize would be appear to be limited, it seems as though the *political* opening provided by the NGO opposition to APEC may not be pushed any further. It is likely that NGOs concerned with human rights, gender, labour rights, migrant rights, the environment, and indigenous people will continue to oppose APEC as long as it gives figure to that which impedes the completion of their identities. However, whether or not that opposition will continue to be organized in the same

manner as it was in the past is uncertain. Aside from this uncertainty, one can identify a number of crucial elements which may further foreclose the possibility of deterritorializing democracy and the the *political* opening it carries. The first of these, and perhaps the most important, is the specific articulation of the discourse of opposition. As we saw in Chapter Four, the deconstructive impulse which accompanies the democratic symbolic order can not predetermine the direction social struggle will take. The markers of certainty such as the territorialization of democracy can dissolve, but what replaces them can not be predetermined nor can its democratic character be guaranteed. In this sense, there is a need to distinguish between the democratic symbolic order and the principles of the democratic imaginary. As I argued in Chapter Four, in responding to an antagonism, collective action against relations of oppression can be articulated in a manner which follows the ethos of an agonistic model of democratic politics, i.e., deepen and expand the principles of liberty and equality along forms of agonistic respect, or it can not. In the case that concerns this chapter, the possible deepening and expansion of these principles comes from disaggregating territoriality from the democratic imaginary. However, as we had to conclude, such a disaggregation in the NGO discourse of opposition was more exceptional than common. Thus, despite the fact that it is democracy which provides the symbolic ordering of social relations from which the NGO opposition is enabled, the possibility of deterritorializing democracy is not always followed. So long as this possibility is not followed, the sedimentation of a deterritorialized form of democracy will not take hold in the political imaginary. As we learned from Laclau and Mouffe, the antagonism is an empty or free floating signifier which means that the specific articulation of the response to this antagonism can not be predetermined and remains open. As we made clear at the beginning of this chapter, abandoning the position which leads to an essentialization of social movements and their

constituent NGOs, forces us also to abandon the position that NGOs are inherently progressive and necessarily engaged in transformative politics. Much of the NGO discourse of opposition to APEC redeploys the political imaginary of an interstate world which obscures the possibility of deterritorializing democracy. Furthermore, there is nothing which can predetermine whether the discourse of opposition will respect the agonistic form of the antagonism to which they are responding. The possibility that a more militant and uncompromising ‘anti-imperialist’ stance overtakes the articulation of the discourse and moves it towards a ‘friend/ enemy’ intonation is not foreclosed. Within this context, an ‘us’/ ‘them’ dichotomy becomes intransigent and agonistic dialogue is disallowed. If the tone of the opposition moves in this direction the possibility of physical violence can not be eliminated. Elements of a more intransigent anti-imperialist position in the 1998 ‘Peoples’ Assembly’ as well as in the broader opposition to APEC became more apparent in recent years. This in part lead to the fact that no large scale ‘People’s Summit’ was organized in New Zealand in 1999.<sup>159</sup> However, it is not that the anti-imperialist position is inappropriate or necessarily hostile to an agonistic model of democratic politics. Indeed, much of the contention that components of global governance like APEC are in collusion with monopoly capital and that this collusion is the basis of the antagonism motivating collective action is accurate. Again, whether the anti-imperialist discourse goes against the objectives of agonistic democratic politics depends entirely on how this discourse is formulated and if the ‘them’ of globalization becomes the ‘enemy’ worthy of resorting to physical violence. Such an articulation is not only unacceptable to the democratic ethos of agonistic respect and agonistic pluralism for the ‘other’, but it also closes the possibility of deterritorializing democracy by opening the possibility for the state

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<sup>159</sup> Refer to footnote six, Chapter One.

to respond with force and thereby reterritorialize and securitize the political space created by the opposition. Elements of this response have not been absent from the parallel forums on APEC. Although such a forceful reterritorialization of the political space on the part of the state contributes to reinforcing the antagonism and potentially the opposition, it also allows the state to deploy itself as guarantor of civil order and security which conveys a legitimacy to the use of force against its citizens. Thus, in a sense, an intransigent anti-imperialist discourse would indirectly service a reterritorialization of politics and further allow for the exclusion of global governance from the realm of the democratic imaginary.

This leads us directly to the second element which may foreclose the possibility of deterritorializing democracy: the discursive response to the opposition. Within APEC, part of this response has taken the form of a cooptation. In the lead up to the meeting in Vancouver, the Canadian government initiated a formal and substantial consultation process with representatives of the NGO community in Canada, and also provided modest financing for the 'People's Summit'. Most likely the reason for the consultation process stemmed from the success of the opposition in the Philippines the previous year. It is doubtful that the Canadian government would have initiated anything otherwise.<sup>160</sup> In any event, the process did lead to the writing of a report by the Policy Working Group of the Canadian Organizing Network which was the lead organizer for the 1997 People's Summit. The report contained policy recommendations which sought to push the Canadian government's position, and by extension APEC's agenda, towards a broader vision of sustainable

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<sup>160</sup> This assertion is based in the author's own participation in the NGO consultation process during the Summer of 1997.

development.<sup>161</sup> All told, the recommendations did not influence APEC's agenda, but the consultation process did seem to change the Canadian government's position vis-à-vis the relationship between NGOs and economic globalization embodied in APEC. Indeed, the following year in Malaysia, Canadian representatives proposed "to broaden public engagement in the APEC process" in order to find "new partners in search of solutions to increasingly complex problems", "garner support for further liberalization", and "make globalization work better".<sup>162</sup> It is clear that 'engagement' in this case meant broadening the scope of those involved in the existing negotiations and issues of APEC, which by definition is what cooptation means. As we saw earlier in this chapter, for certain NGOs, such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and certain environmental groups, some form of 'cooptation' is exactly what is being sought. In the end however, even this limited form of engagement proposed by the Canadian government in Kuala Lumpur was rejected by the other APEC members. Evidently, cooptation would not foster new forms of practice of politics let alone allow for the possibility of deterritorializing democracy.

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<sup>161</sup> Policy Working Group, 'Canada and APEC: Perspectives from Civil Society'.

<sup>162</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, 'Engaging Our People', *Far Eastern Economic Review* (December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1998), 29. The not so subtle paternalistic tone of Axworthy's title also gives us insight into how the relationship between governments who work at fostering economic globalization and NGOs which oppose it is envisioned.

## Chapter Six

### Reflections on Theorizing the Political and Democracy in International Theory

The objective of this thesis was to develop a theoretical framework capable of providing a reading of the relationship between APEC and the parallel NGO forums which have regularly opposed the interstate organization since 1993. By doing so, the thesis sought to contribute to our understanding of broader issues surrounding international organizations, global governance, civil society and democracy among others. In order to do this, the thesis argued that it was necessary to make a distinction between the *politics (la politique)* of APEC and its *political (le politique)* dimension. Based on this distinction, the thesis maintained that the politics of APEC contained a more profound political dimension, and that if we were to properly analyse the NGO opposition it was crucial to apprehend it at the level of the political. Indeed, it is by apprehending APEC at the level of the political that one can see how its discourse (re)deploys a *discourse on the social* which carries with it implications for identity/ difference. Because the discourse on the social that APEC (re)deploys is too narrowly circumscribed, it tends to obscure difference and consequently nourish antagonism. The NGO opposition articulated at the parallel People's Summit, the thesis argued, was a response to this antagonism. Limiting ourselves to the level of politics would not only occult this discourse on the social, but it would also tend to confront us with the failures and weaknesses of APEC as an interstate 'regime' which has largely been unable to deliver on its stated agenda. As such, contrary to other interstate organizations, APEC has not led to the same kinds of structural consequences for its member states. Therefore, arguing that the social contestation articulated by NGOs was induced by the impact of APEC's agenda would neglect the

fact that this agenda has failed to materialize in a manner similar to the one pursued by, for instance, NAFTA.

In light of the argument that NGO opposition stemmed from APEC's political dimension, the principal theoretical work of the thesis sought to develop a vantage point from which the distinction between politics and the political could be made and introduced to the field of international theory (IT). In order to make this distinction, it was useful to approach the issue through the recent debate on the question of foundation in IT, i.e., the foundationalist/ anti-foundationalist debate. This provided a relevant and current point of reference from which an understanding of the political could be formulated. The usage of this debate showed that the apparent impasse on the political with which this debate confronts us depends in part upon how the debate itself is characterized. Because the articulation of the debate tends to privilege an understanding of foundation which is equated with 'presence', there is a tendency to occult a body of literature capable of offering an alternative understanding of foundation and its relation to the political. Rather than limiting ourselves to the 'either' / 'or' choice created by the current label of the debate, the thesis suggests that we should view foundation as caught within an (im)possibility. This way of characterizing foundation seeks to highlight the inherent paradox between the unavoidable necessity of foundation and the impossibility of articulating an unconditional foundational ground. Rather than resolve this paradox, the political is fundamentally embroiled in it.

In order to provide a reading of this paradox, the thesis explored the work of Lefort and in particular his explanation of the 'democratic adventure'. The relevance of Lefort's work on democracy was that not only did it provide a reading of democracy beyond its institutional makeup,

but also that it revealed the modern social form as being marked by an unaccessible absence. The symbolic ordering of social relations within the democratic adventure (to be equated with modernity's adventure) places the question of foundation and the political at the heart of the social and symbolically disallows answering this question. Consequently, no One discourse on the social can consubstantiate itself with power since the place of power remains symbolically empty. This means that the markers of certainty of any discourse on the social seeking to be foundational could always be confronted by the risk of their dissolution since they can not tie themselves to an unconditional ground. Following Derrida, such markers can only resolve their aporetic quality through an arbitrary '*coup de force*'. The particular character of the symbolic order of democracy also means that social contestation, division, or antagonism, becomes an inherent feature of the symbolic ordering of social relations since division finds itself without unconditional mediation. There is no longer a discourse which can intervene unconditionally and 'suture' social division as Laclau would say. Importantly, this means that the relations of the 'self' to the 'other' remained open. It is based on Lefort's reading of the democratic adventure that one can envision the modern social experience as marked by a metaphysics of absence, i.e., the transcendence of absence but within immanence. Within this context, the political becomes the attempt to lay foundation in the face of pre-ontological meaninglessness. And finally, with its emphasis on the symbolic, Lefort's thinking also directed us towards the discursive, i.e., language, text, imaginary, discourse, hegemony, and ideology. This is the level at which the political is apprehended.

The usage of the debate on foundation as a reference point for an understanding of the political required a relatively deep exploration into the field of political thought. In fact, a substantial part of the contribution of this thesis stems from the introduction of some of this

literature to the field of IT and its current debates. In particular, Lefort's work brings a fresh and relatively unexplored perspective to current theorizations in the fields of international relations and global political economy. It does so by providing significant insight into the context from which our understanding of the political and foundation should begin.

With the understanding of the political and its relation to foundation developed in this thesis, APEC can now be read differently. The fundamental shift which occurs in the thesis' reading of APEC and which distinguishes it substantially from other readings, is that APEC is no longer seen as the outcome or byproduct of prior forces, namely interstate relations and economic globalization. Rather, APEC becomes a political site where these prior forces are given the semblance of a fixed structured reality. The objective, then, was to illustrate how APEC's discourse (both formal and practical) tends to (de)politicize itself by purporting to be merely a reflection or description of what is already there, no more than *l'énoncé du réel*. Through a series of discursive manoeuvres, APEC's discourse gives the appearance that it operates solely at the level of the practice of politics. This sustains the illusion that APEC is merely the byproduct of more fundamental forces while occulting the fact that it participates in setting the terrain of its own foundation. From the theoretical vantage point developed in this thesis, APEC is a political site since it is a place where that which has no ontological status prior to discursivity (i.e., geopoliticizing economics, the cooperation/ conflict problématique, the division between politics and economics, and the Asia-Pacific imaginary) is given the appearance of fixed structured reality. As such, these discursive manoeuvres set and patrol the parameters of political possibilities by (re)deploying old imaginaries (e.g., the inherent conflictual nature of interstate relations) as well as newer ones (e.g., the relationship between politics and economics in open regionalism). By

establishing the parameters of the terrain along traditional lines of political imagination, there is an inherent occultation of other possibilities. What is of significant interest with APEC is that other possibilities could potentially find an articulation at the parallel People's Summits. In other words, the 'politicalness' of APEC also stems from the fact that its discourse was antagonistic. In responding to this antagonism, the NGOs are challenging the politics of APEC. This challenge holds the possibility of an alternative resolution of the political.

Not wanting to leave the analysis merely at the level of critique, the second major section of the thesis sought to theorize more specifically the NGO opposition to APEC in order to see if this form of social contestation as a challenge to APEC's politics could provide us with something new at the level of political imagination. Specifically, the thesis wanted to verify its second argument: that the NGO opposition to APEC opens the possibility for a deterritorialization of democracy. This effort to move beyond the level of critique is to be understood as a desire to place the thesis within a certain critical tradition which has some heritage both within IT as well as in social sciences more generally. Perhaps one could draw a parallel between this dimension of the thesis and the double meaning of the label 'post-marxism' which has been used to characterize the work of Laclau and Mouffe. In this sense, the thesis is *post-marxist* because it seeks to abandon some of the essential features of Marxism, namely economic reductionism and class determinism. The commitment to metaphysics of presence capable of rendering a picture of totality upon which these essential features of Marxism rely is also rejected. But it is also *post-marxist* rather than 'post' something else. It is *post-marxist* to the extent that it remains committed to identifying possible sites of political change capable of animating struggles against relations of inequality. By conceptualizing the possibility of deterritorializing democracy as a disaggregation of territory from the series of

correspondences drawn in the democratic imaginary, the thesis sought to contribute to the tradition of critical theorizing in IT. If indeed deterritorializing democracy was a feature of the discourse of opposition to APEC, then the imaginary space capable of fostering struggles against inequality would be extended. There would be a deepening and an expansion of the democratic imaginary by spreading it to a field which has tended to be outside its effects: the imaginary of interstate economic relations as embodied in APEC. With the NGO opposition, the markers of certainty, specifically territoriality, which had contributed to maintaining the democratic imaginary at bay were possibly being contested.

In order to provide the conceptualization for a deterritorialization of democracy, the thesis examined the work of Laclau and Mouffe as well as that of Connolly. Because we were dealing with a form of social contestation which I argued revolved around questions of identity/difference we needed to examine a very specific and limited body of literature. Whereas Connolly's work provided the initial idea,<sup>1</sup> Laclau and Mouffe's major oeuvre provided most of the 'how to': *why* social struggle comes about, *how* it is produced, *when* generally it is initiated, and upon *what* discursive basis should its discourse of opposition be articulated. The displacement of the democratic imaginary towards a non-territorial form could be conceptualized based on the authors' notion of the equivalential-egalitarian logic present in the democratic symbolic order. Based on this notion, what potentially occurred with the NGO opposition was a rearticulation of the democratic imaginary in a manner which would provide for its deterritorialization. If this potential was to realize itself, a series of equivalences would be drawn between the experience of democracy

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<sup>1</sup> William E. Connolly, 'Democracy and Territoriality', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 3 (1991), 463-484.

territorialized and democracy deterritorialized. This would mean that that which normally falls outside of the democratic imaginary, an interstate economic organization, would slip within the realm of democratic contestation. APEC *itself*, its discourse on the social, would become the site of contestation involving an agonistic struggle over meaning. The possibility of deterritorializing the democratic imaginary was based on the contention that NGOs were responding to the antagonisms contained in APEC's discourse on the social, and did so wherever the annual leaders meeting happened to be. This suggested that the opposition was regularly targeting a level of the modern political imaginary which had traditionally escaped the democratic symbolic order: the international and its interstate imaginary. Because of this, the thesis argued that the potential for a deterritorialization of democracy was opened. What enables this conceptualization is democracy understood as a symbolic ordering of social relations. Such an understanding provides the possibility of removing territoriality as a necessary condition of democracy because it does not conceive of democracy as merely an institutional form guaranteed by the juridical authority of the state. Rather, it expresses democracy as a symbolic form in which the place of power is empty and markers of certainty are always potentially faced with their dissolution.

The second argument of the thesis therefore was based on an inference with the concept of displacement at work in the equivalential-egalitarian logic which accompanies the democratic symbolic order. As Laclau and Mouffe have shown, it is through the displacement of democratic imaginary that collective action against inequality is enabled. The contention of the thesis was that without some form of displacement of the democratic imaginary from its traditional frame, i.e., that of the institutions provided by the state, it is hard to envision how the NGO opposition could have occurred. What the thesis sought to verify was if the displacement of the

democratic imaginary pushed the latter towards a rearticulation along non-territorial lines.

However, in order to envision a deterritorialization of democracy, there was a need to review 'globalization'. The discourse of globalization as captured by APEC's discourse on the social could not be seen merely as a threat to the democratic project. The antagonisms this discourse carries had to be viewed as fundamentally empty or free floating, i.e., without an *unconditional* meaning. This does not mean that 'globalization' did not come with meaning, nor that the meaning it did come with was not a threat to the project of democracy as was suggested by Mouffe. What it meant was that the meaning the discourse of globalization carried could not be seen as unconditional. As such, there is nothing in the antagonism carried in the discourse of globalization that precludes a response to it being articulated in an *agonistic* form, that is in a form which favours agonistic struggles against relations of inequality. As a political discourse which produces antagonisms, economic globalization, *like any other political discourse which fosters inequality*, deploys a discourse on the social which by producing antagonisms is open to rearticulations. The contention is that, as globalization becomes more prevalent *as a discourse on the social* and consequently marked by antagonisms, it becomes the site of opposition as is the case with APEC. The possible discursive articulations of this opposition are open. The potential for the markers of certainty which confined the democratic experience to territory to become embroiled in the antagonisms produced by the discourse of globalization can not be foreclosed. These same markers can lose their apparent foundational status. The discourse of interstate relations and the imaginary of international relations are opened to their contingent foundation. It may make it more difficult to (re)institute the inside/ outside spacial demarcation as immutable structures which necessarily contain democracy. Even though globalization's discourse on the social is partly made to operate

from a space which is outside of the institutions of democracy, it does not mean that its possible rearticulations may not coincide with the democratic imaginary. In the case of this thesis, whether it did or not depended on how the discourse of opposition was formulated.

Based on the conceptualization which underlies the thesis' view of a possible form of deterritorialized democracy, the final work of the thesis was to probe the NGO discourse as it has been articulated at the parallel forums through the final Declarations and Statements. The objective was to evaluate if deterritorializing democracy became part of the discourse of opposition. What we were looking for is a disaggregation of territory from the democratic imaginary thereby allowing for APEC and its discourse on the social to fall within the gamut of democratic contestation. It is this initial deconstruction of the democratic imaginary generated by the antagonism in the practice of politics of neo-liberal economic globalization as voiced by APEC which has allowed for the possible reconstruction of this imaginary along a non-territorial form.<sup>2</sup> If such an articulation was seized in the NGO discourse of opposition, then the possibility of problematizing the correspondence between democracy and territoriality could acquire sedimentation within the political imaginary. In other words, if this had been a consistent feature of the parallel forums on APEC, then the possibility of deterritorializing democracy could have left some residue within the political imagination. As Judith Butler has argued "every determined structure gains its determination by a repetition".<sup>3</sup> This applies to repetitions which sustain past structures of political imagination as well as ones which foster new structural possibilities. If the practice of politics articulated by NGOs had consistently included a

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<sup>2</sup> Contrary to those who would associate deconstruction to destruction, what is suggested here is that new forms of potentially democratic practices are made possible through deconstruction. On this line of argument in IT see David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 219.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Butler, 'Further Reflections on Conversations of Our Time', *Diacritics*, 27, no. 1 (1997), 14.

contestation of the frontiers which occulted the possibility of disaggregating territory from the dominant political imaginary, this feature of its practice of politics could have potentially gained a certain degree of 'permanence'. As pointed out by Derrida, foundation acquires its foundational status in part through a retroactive naming of its source. The call to a past and to a future in the NGO Declarations and Statements could be seen as working towards giving this deterritorialized form of opposition sedimentation in the political imaginary. With the possibility of invoking 'history', and through repetition, such opposition can come closer to an 'institutional form' although what such a form would look like remains largely unclear. However, a 'first step' in formulating any such institutionalization is provided by accessing and displacing the democratic symbolic order and applying it to a space from which it has generally been absent.

The problem with which we were confronted subsequent to our analysis of the NGO discourse as it was formulated in the final Declarations, was that we did not find a consistent displacement of the democratic imaginary in the manner we were looking for. On the contrary, the overall structure of the final Declarations tended to articulate the opposition in a manner which led to a reterritorialization of democratic contestation. Rather than address itself to APEC, more often than not the opposition targeted its member governments. What does this mean? It means that overall, the democratic imaginary and the space of social contestation in the NGO Declarations remained territorialized. It means that there is a tendency in the formulation of the NGO discourse of opposition as captured by the People's Summit Declarations to redeploy the modern political imagination in its territorial form. The potential to expand and deepen the space of the democratic imaginary in a manner which would disaggregate territoriality is generally obscured. This tends to qualify the argument that NGOs are inherently progressive *if* we assume that 'progressive' implies

genuinely new ways of imagining the practice of politics. There were however, some important openings which can not be dismissed. Both in 1995 at the International NGO Conference on APEC in Kyoto, and in 1996 at the Manila People's Forum on APEC, the final Declarations provided some interesting formulations which tended to move beyond the traditional frame of democratic contestation. In particular, the section on Governance and the Role of the State in the Manila Declaration tended to move away from the traditional space of the democratic imaginary. The fact that the title of this section separates 'governance' from 'the role of the state' tends to suggest that there is a problematization of the state as the exclusive or final authority for politics. In other words, *governance* is not seen as limited to the traditional space of *government*. Rather than limit itself to demands addressed to the state, in this section of the Manila Declaration, APEC itself is charged with being antidemocratic, untransparent, unaccountable, and lacking in popular participation.<sup>4</sup> Based on the title of the section, one can assume that APEC is targeted directly because it is seen as a component of a form of governance transcending, or at least to some degree separate from that of the state. Of course, the contention that there exists a structure of economic global governance beyond the government of the state has been around for some time, at least in academic circles. What is perhaps novel in this case, and made evident with the broader NGO opposition to APEC, is that economic global governance no longer seems to have the status of "*la nébuleuse*".<sup>5</sup> In other words, it is no longer seen as an obscure political entity outside of the public domain and beyond democratic contestation. As was argued at the onset of this thesis, APEC's particular discourse combined with its organizational structure has tended to make it far less obscure than its

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<sup>4</sup> See quote on page 250.

<sup>5</sup> In reference to Cox's terminology as used in footnote seven, Chapter One.

counterparts. Rather than maintain a secretive profile as is generally the case with other interstate economic fora, APEC has tended to have the character of a harbinger for neo-liberal economic globalization and its discourse on the social while doing so from the imaginary of an interstate world. 'La nébuleuse' no longer seems so nebulous. It becomes a visible site from which a discourse on the social is (re)deployed. This seems to be what is acknowledged in the section on Governance and the Role of the State. Here, APEC is not seen as merely the byproduct of national governments cooperating on economic issues because of global market forces. Rather, the charge that is made in this part of the Declaration insinuates that APEC is envisioned as a political entity apart from its status as an interstate economic organization. The contention that APEC is antidemocratic, untransparent, unaccountable, and lacking in popular participation relies on believing that APEC is *political*. Envisioning APEC as such required imagining *politics* differently than has been provided by the modern frame and its forced territorial resolution.

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