

Alternatives for dismantling corporate power

Recommendations for governments, social movements and citizens at large

Gonzalo Fernández Ortiz de Zárate

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Alternatives for dismantling corporate power

Recommendations for governments, social movements and citizens at large

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Resumen

Nunca antes las empresas transnacionales habían estado tan presentes en prácticamente todos los ámbitos de nuestras vidas. Su incidencia económica, cultural, política y jurídica es tal, que incluso hablamos de poder corporativo como el protagonista del modelo hegemónico de sociedad global. Dicho modelo, articulado en torno al capitalismo, atraviesa en la actualidad una profunda crisis que pone en riesgo la propia sostenibilidad de la vida en el planeta. El conflicto entre el capital y la vida se agudiza y es preciso impulsar alternativas que trasciendan el *statu quo*, desmantelando al poder corporativo como condición necesaria –aunque no suficiente– para una transición civilizatoria desde claves emancipadoras.

El presente trabajo recoge una propuesta de marco de referencia para enfrentar esta tarea, así como una agenda con propuestas específicas en 20 ámbitos complementarios para avanzar en la misma. Estas se concretan finalmente en recomendaciones para diferentes agentes sociales e institucionales, dentro de una lógica inclusiva y de corresponsabilidad en defensa de la vida, la democracia, el bien común y la sostenibilidad.

Palabras clave: empresas transnacionales, poder corporativo, capital, alternativa, vida.

Laburpena

Inoiz baino gehiago, enpresa transnationalek presentzia nabarmena daukate gure bizitzetako esparru guztietan. Hainbestekoa da beraien eragin ekonomiko, kultural, politiko eta juridikoa, botere korporatiboa gizarte globalaren eredu hegemonikoaren protagonistatzat jo dezakegula. Eredu hau, kapitalismoaren inguruan artikulatutakoa, bizitzaren jasangarritasuna planetan arriskuan jartzen duen krisialdi sakon batetan dago murgilduta. Kapitala eta bizitzaren arteko gatazka areagotzen ari da, statu quo hau gainditzen duten alternatibak bultzatzea beharrezkoa bilakatzen delarik. Zeregin honetan, botere korporatiboaren eraispena beharrezko baldintza bezala agertzen zaigu -ez nahikoa, hala ere- emantzipazio-gakoak oinarri dituen zibilizazio-trantsizio baten bideari ekiteko.

Lan honek zeregin honi aurre egiteko erreferentzia-marko bat proposatzen du, urratsak egiteko elkarren artean osagarriak diren 20 esparrutarako proposamen zehatzak barneratzen dituen agenda batekin batera. Azkenik, hauek gizarte- eta instituzio-eragile desberdinei zuzendutako hainbat gomendiotan zehazten dira, bizitza, demokrazia, guztien ona eta jasangarritasuna defendatzea oinarri duen ko-ardurazko logika inklusibo baten baitan.

Gako-hitzak: enpresa transnacionalak, botere korporatiboa, kapitala, alternatiba, bizitza.

Abstract

Never before have transnational companies been so present in practically all spheres of our lives. Their economic, cultural, political and legal weight are such that we may speak of corporate power as the leading player in the hegemonic model of global society. This model, articulated around capitalism, is currently undergoing a severe crisis that jeopardises the very sustainability of life on the planet. The conflict between capital and life is becoming more acute and we need to promote alternatives to transcend the status quo, dismantling corporate power as a precondition (though insufficient in itself) for a civilising and emancipatory transition.

This paper offers a frame of reference for tackling this task, with an agenda of specific proposals in 20 complementary areas for taking a transition forward. Finally these are translated into recommendations for the various social and institutional agents, within a logic of inclusiveness and co-responsibility in defence of life, democracy, the common good and sustainability.

Keywords: transnational companies, corporate power, capital, alternative, life.

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We assert that there is a structural contradiction between the process of capital appreciation and the sustainability of life, and that, under the pre-eminence of the former, the latter is always endangered.

Amaia Pérez Orozco
Subversión feminista de la economía
(*Feminist subversion of economics*) (2014)

The evolution of global capitalism from the late 19th century to the present has consolidated and reinforced the crucial role of transnational corporations in the world economy, as well as their growing dominance over multiple spheres of life on earth. This has been especially so in the past four decades, as financial globalisation processes and the expansion of neoliberal policies have fuelled the construction internationally of a complex economic, political, cultural and legal architecture of which large corporations have been the main beneficiaries.

Juan Hernández y Pedro Ramiro
Against the lex mercatoria (2015)

The *sociology of emergences* involves investigating the alternatives present within the horizons of concrete possibilities. It involves symbolically extending knowledges, practices and agents so as to identify therein the trends of the future (the not yet) on which we may act so as to enhance the prospects of hope as against the prospects of frustration. This symbolic extension is basically an exercise of sociological imagination with a twin aim: on one hand, ascertaining the conditions conducive to the prospects of hope, and on the other, defining what principles may promote the realisation of those conditions.

Boaventura De Sousa Santos
El milenio huérfano (*The orphan millennium*) (2011)

1. Corporate power in global society today¹

Though multinational companies² have always played a prominent role on the international scene, they have now amassed an unprecedented power that is greater and farther reaching than ever before. This power draws on and also feeds the hegemonic values of a model of global society organised around capitalism – progress, individualism, limitless accumulation and growth, science as the sole knowledge, subjugation of nature by humans, representative liberal democracy – which is today in a crisis permeating all of civilisation and jeopardising the very sustainability of life. There is thus a close link between system of civilisation, global model and corporate power, in a context marked by growing conflict between life and capital.

In this chapter we will explore this theme by first outlining the reasons for which we believe we are at a critical historical juncture, facing a highly complex and uncertain scenario. Second we will outline the ways and means by which, in our view, the hegemonic agenda is sought to be perpetuated, and finally we will examine the role played in that agenda by corporate power. Thus, consequent to viewing corporate power as that agenda's chief actor, we will assert lastly that dismantling corporate power is a prerequisite for setting out on pathways for defending life, thwarting the designs of big business for the 21st century by positing alternative civilisational criteria.

a. Capital versus life: an unprecedented crisis

The foundations on which the current civilisational project rests – the values of capitalist modernity mentioned above – are in crisis. This is not a mere opinion or ethereal construct, based on doom and gloom or wishful thinking, but a statement of the observable reality that beyond the growing asymmetries inherent in the status quo, ethically and politically unsustainable and unjustifiable as they are, today we face two grave and momentous issues liable to alter our perceptions of present and future.

On one hand, capitalism's ability to perpetuate itself is increasingly widely questioned. The Organisation for Cooperation and Development (OECD) – also known as the “rich countries' club”, and so hardly likely to be wishing to generate uncertainty about the health of our economic system – predicts weak growth up to at least 2060, i.e. about 3.6% annually in 2014-2030, receding to 2.7% for 2030-2060, and in a framework of widening income disparities (OECD, 2014). Given that growth is the current system's be-all and end-all, such a forecast clearly points to its great difficulty in overcoming its internal contradictions, currently exacerbated. Thus the conditions for the launch of a new wave of growth in productivity, investment,

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- 1 This paper is both a synthesis and a preview of our book *Alternativas al poder corporativo, 20 propuestas para una agenda de transición en disputa con las empresas transnacionales* (Alternatives to corporate power, 20 proposals for a transitional agenda in dispute with transnational corporations) (Fernández, 2016). It is a synthesis in that summarises the book's main themes and a preview in that it reorganises the 20 proposals and 90 political measures of our framework agenda against corporate power in recommendations for various actors. Thus it tackles the same subject but from a new perspective, drilling down on initiatives and proposals for national and local governments, social movements and citizens at large.
 - 2 In this paper we will use the terms transnational/multinational corporation/company or large corporation interchangeably. In all events we are referring to corporate entities “consisting of a parent company incorporated under the law of a particular country, which establishes itself in other countries through direct investments without setting up local companies, or through subsidiaries incorporated as companies under the law of the host country, and which follow a common strategy directed by a corporate kernel that takes the main decisions regarding production, location of plants, marketing, financing, etc. This characterisation includes many linked forms ranging from groups in a single sector of activity to holding companies run by other firms through shared capital, or conglomerates whose activities are multiple and various” (Hernández, González & Ramiro, 2012).

employment, etc. appear to be lacking, especially in a context marked by acute problems in absorbing and recirculating the huge surplus generated over a phase of financial deregulation and complexification (Harvey, 2012). In any event, and though capitalism's historical dynamism makes it unwise to announce its collapse, the perceivable trends certainly indicate acute structural instability, with dire consequences for the planet and for most of society.

Moreover the doubts as to the system's ability to perpetuate itself turn into certainties as to its incompatibility with sustainable life on earth. For the current climate and energy scenarios show that the notions of unlimited growth and endlessly available energy are myths and ultimately that life is threatened by big business in its role as keystone of the prevailing system. As regards climate change, if the current trend of global temperature increase continues, by 2050 temperatures will be 3.5 °C higher than in pre-industrial times (Bermejo & Eguillor, 2015). The consequences of this ongoing phenomenon are present right now but they are likely to be more severe in the near future in terms of poverty, population displacement, disrupted ecosystems and weather-related disasters. To counter this, after years of negotiations and fiascos – the Kyoto Protocol, the 2009 Copenhagen Conference, etc. – on 12 December 2015, under an unparalleled media spotlight, the final agreement of the 21st Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change set the target of keeping the temperature increase at no more than 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and even envisaged a desirable limit of 1.5 °C. Yet following the accord's entry into force on 4 November 2016 there are serious doubts as to the parties' actual commitments, which have little to do with the targets set initially – highlighting the scant political will to revert the situation and rethink the current economic model (Amigos de la Tierra, 2016).

As to the energy situation, we are witnessing the depletion of the resources – chiefly fossil fuels – on which the hegemonic project for global society has been based, especially since World War II. Thus conventional oil has already reached its peak and gas and coal will probably peak before the end of the 2050s, and the International Energy Agency says even that the combined peak of oil and coal extraction has already been reached (IAE, 2015). These resources, and especially oil, have no substitute in terms of energy density, multiple uses, ease of conveyance and storage, continual availability and high energy return. No alternative energy or combination of energies, whether renewable or non-renewable, can compare to black gold (Fernández Durán & González, 2014). Thus:

Reducing the size of the material sphere of the economy is not optional. The depletion of oil and minerals, climate change and disruptions in natural cycles will impose it on us. Humanity will in any event have to adjust to extracting less materials from the earth and generating less waste. This may take the form either of a fierce combat for the control of dwindling resources, or an adjustment arranged in advance with criteria of fairness (Riechmann et al, 2012: 34).

In a word, the crises of capitalist self-perpetuation, of climate change and of energy situate us at a critical historical moment at which the conflict between capital and life as mutually incompatible civilisational principles has become explicit.

Capitalism is in a civilisational crisis, it has undermined life on the planet and offers no opportunities either for humans or for nature (Ceceña, 2010).

So where we are is not a juncture of inertias and continuities but a phase of profound contention defined by urgency and uncertainty – contention between multiple, disparate agendas which must necessarily adjust to the scenario ahead. And the hegemonic agenda's proponents, as we shall see, are digging in new positions in defence of capital and the current systemic values, despite the dire effects for humanity and the planet. Other wishful approaches have also emerged, such as a faith in technological progress to replace fossil fuels without changing models of production and consumption, or a belief that capitalism might endogenously and progressively shift towards a "sharing economy" (Mason, 2016), as well as directly regressive approaches such as options that would exacerbate inequalities and violence and further curtail freedoms. But such approaches fail to firmly take the side of life from emancipatory stances.

It is precisely here that our efforts must be focussed in order to get out of the impasse we are in, negotiating a way through the host of competing agendas and approaches. The system has failed, and all that remains is to watch it collapse or to “fail better” (Riechmann, 2013), i.e. to rethink global society along new lines. Thus we need to confront the hegemonic agenda of big business with agendas positing emancipatory values contrary to the prevailing ones.

Such is the struggle arising from the conflict between capital and life, and it is taking place in very particular conditions. We set out from a sharp asymmetry of power vis-à-vis the hegemonic agenda. The latter, despite its crisis of self-perpetuation and the threat it poses to the planet, still has great power and legitimacy, and the predicament we are in is not yet evident to society at large. The contest between rival agendas is in turn taking place in a highly complex and uncertain context in which the ground has shifted for all of us. Both sides, those defending capital and those seeking a wider perpetuation of life, set out from an overly complexified economic reality, from a political scenario with diffuse sovereignties and multiple spheres of responsibility and actors, and above all from the inevitability of the depletion of non-renewable fossil fuels, definitively changing the rules of the game and the way ahead. We shall now see what the hegemonic agenda offers in these circumstances.

b. The hegemonic agenda in defence of capital

To enter the struggle between capital and life in defence of the latter, it is vital not just to grasp the extent of the civilisational task we face but also to be acquainted with the main dynamics, tendencies, mutations and features emerging in the hegemonic model of global society. Our alternative outlooks should thus combine the long haul of structural change with diagnostics and proposals rooted in the here and now. Hence we must analyse the agenda by which that model perpetuates itself and projects itself forward, so as to be able to combat it.

Starting from this premise, we will highlight six especially notable features which in our view are discernable in the hegemonic agenda today, in the 21st century:



Source: Author

- *Corporate power as a leading player in the hegemonic agenda.* In our next section we will systematically explore the role played by today’s multinational corporations on the economic, cultural, political and legal fronts in defence of the prevailing systemic values, so here we merely note that multinationals are in a privileged position to do so. They are thus able to establish their agenda as the hegemonic baseline, notably including the pursuit of a new round of global and regional trade and investment deals. Accordingly the weak growth prospects for the coming decade and the need to limit the state-

level resistance arising over the past decade to transnational hegemony have encouraged corporate powerbrokers to seek a consolidation of legal certainty for their investments as an overriding principle, with a view to appropriating future meagre economic returns via new trade treaties – TPP, TTIP, CETA and TISA³– (Zabalo, 2014). Such treaties generally seek to apply similar criteria (within their respective regions or sectors) aimed at opening up yet more spheres of life to privatisation, applying downward regulatory convergence to social and environmental safeguards, imposing private arbitration courts for settling disputes between corporations and states and allowing for lower tariffs. They are thus another twist in the neoliberal narrative, seeking to enthrone large corporations as supreme economic and political agents.

- *A geopolitical battle for hegemony.* The global agenda based on trade and investment deals as sponsored by corporate power is part of a worldwide struggle for hegemony. This hegemony is to be construed as not just of nation-states but of an array of multiple strategic actors, and particularly large corporations, around states, setting up networks through businesses and institutions assuring their worldwide dominance (Ornelas, 2010). The chief geopolitical struggle in this scenario of multiple joint sovereignties is that between the US and China – and the main multinationals with their parents in the two countries – for the role of *hegemon*, vying for the control of territories and resources (fossil fuels, water, land, food, etc.) in a context of depletion and scarcity, at least for today's unbridled consumerism. Thus rival capital interests vying to control territories and common goods is a feature of the hegemonic agenda that will mark the course of the political struggle in the decades ahead.
- *Financialisation of the economy.* The role of a complexified and deregulated financial system likewise characterises 21st century capitalism and its agenda. Given the scant prospects of general economic growth based on a new phase of expansion, it is more than likely that the current trend of seeking to reproduce capital by financial means will continue or even intensify. Thus as long as no basis is laid for widespread increases in productivity and rates of return, the question of public and private debt will remain critical and the hallmarks of financialisation will continue to be transferred to the rest of the economy. So short-termism, ungovernability, profiteering and speculation will continue to mark the scenario in the near future, possibly increasing structural instability and social asymmetries (Blyth, 2014).
- *Shifting of the boundaries of exclusion.* The modernising mould has always set up boundaries, deeply etched lines defining who one is, who can or can't, who knows and who doesn't. And hence who is or is not a subject of law, rights, knowledge and transformation – who in the system's eyes ultimately deserves the status of visible or invisible, human or subhuman. These entrenched lines were defined historically in relation to colonies, to the global South, to the East, to nature. But now such boundaries are being reconfigured with the crisis and the march of neoliberal globalisation and are being drawn also within home-country societies. The status of exclusion and legal inexistence is thus conferred on ever more sectors of society. The colonial approach is extended so as to progressively exclude more lives through proxy governments that relinquish their function of regulating society and farm out their services privately, encouraging a logic of social fascism in which an acutely unequal system of power relations is set up, giving the strong a power of veto over the lives and livelihoods of the weak (Santos, 2014). Accordingly the narrative of public rights and equality is depreciating as the hegemonic agenda shows its starkly exclusionary colours.
- *Violence as a structural resource.* In the current context of systemic crisis and exclusion, the violent mould of capitalist modernity is manifested in ever more forms. Thus violence is acquiring a distinctly colonial hue with a logic including a new round of geopolitical conflicts involving wars and invasions as well as traditional and new-style coups d'état. But this violence also bears a heteropatriarchal stamp, notably including all kinds of violence used against the bodies of women – of which femicide is the most extreme but far from the only expression, in a pattern combining physical, symbolic, cultural and other assaults – along with a proliferation of hate crimes against sexual identities other than the hegemonic one. Finally, in line with the lead taken by corporate power, hitherto unknown forms of

3 Respectively, Trans-Pacific Partnership, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, Trade in Services Agreement.

violence are being deployed, such as are used by private security and private armies or are being assayed in “territorial archipelagos” (Ceceña, 2016), outside any public institutional framework, in a great range including alegal experiences such as Guantanamo, areas being established under exclusive private control such as the “model cities” of Honduras, multiple housing condominiums or the huge sphere occupied directly by illicit-economy networks. The modus operandi of violence is mutating and in this troubled context it is ramping up and being dealt out by new privatised operators.

- *A capitalist assault on democracy.* The emergence of the above five features has profoundly challenged the already degraded basis of modern capitalism’s own political model. Thus neoliberal globalisation had already subverted the concepts of sovereignty and citizenship in their usual senses, linked to the nation-state, by transferring strategic decisions to supranational arenas with no specific sovereign actor and more liable to influence by multinationals. But this dynamic of drift away from popular majorities in decision-making seems now to be exacerbated by the pressure of corporate power which, in this context of low forecast growth and political tension, contests even the slightest institutional capacity to limit the sphere of markets or restrain the reproduction of capital. The new trade deals and geopolitical battles show a fierce, exclusionary and violent assault on liberal representative democracy. It is not just a matter of blocking processes of direct and participatory democracy but also of removing governments’ ability to develop policy autonomously. The despotic character of big business and its antagonism to democracy are thereby made plain, showing that as well as peoples and communities, the public sphere as a whole is now a strategic theatre of contention.

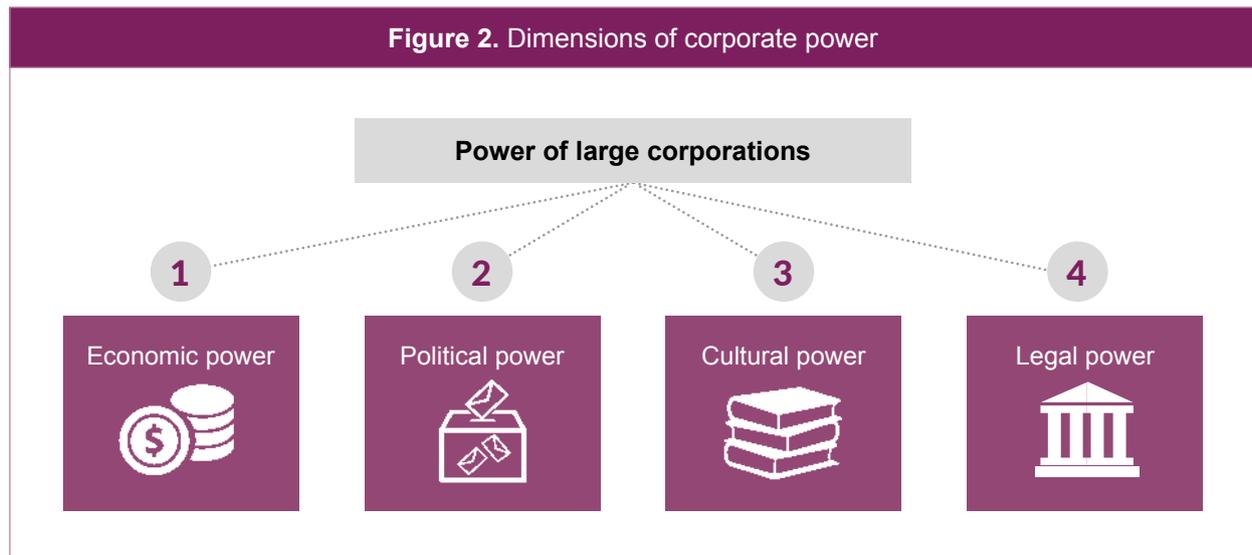
As a social system, social fascism may coexist with liberal political democracy. As well as sacrificing democracy to the demands of global capitalism, it trivialises democracy to the point that it is no longer necessary or even appropriate to sacrifice democracy for capitalism’s benefit. So this is a pluralist fascism, a form of fascism hitherto unknown. Indeed we may be entering a period – and I believe it is so – in which societies are politically democratic and socially fascistic (Santos, 2014:36).

In short we face a hegemonic agenda which, given the system’s crisis of self-perpetuation, is reaffirming its model’s strong values (maximisation of profit, legal certainty for investments) to the detriment of the weak ones (democracy, sovereignty, etc.), which are losing even their degraded current meanings. Consequently the present and future scenarios appear characterised by the spread of the logic of exclusion and violence, whether colonial, class-based, heteropatriarchal or for the control of territories and resources, along with corporate power definitively setting itself up as a leading political and economic player, launching a virulent offensive on peoples, territories and even public institutions that fail to submit to it, thereby making explicit the contradiction between capital and democracy – between capital and life.

Dismantling corporate power, blocking new regional and global trade deals, defending territories and common goods (whether public or community property), dismantling the deregulated and complexified financial system, tackling exclusion and violence of all kinds and championing democracy as a key value – all are strategic priorities, inter alia, for any alternative agenda that is to defend life and the common good. Next we will look at the importance of contending with large corporations if we are to make headway with this.

c. Corporate power as a leading player in the hegemonic agenda

Large corporations have amassed power transcending the economic field, pervading the cultural, political and legal spheres. As remarked above, we cannot regard them as just another kind of company operating in capitalist markets; rather we should speak of corporate power in an all-inclusive and comprehensive sense, driving the hegemonic agenda from its base in transnational companies on every front and shaping a model of global governance in its own image.



This is thus a power with no historical precedent. For though big firms have always had considerable influence in world society, their pre-eminence has grown rapidly with neoliberal globalisation to the point that they are now its lead player. Our assertion as to the specificity of the phenomenon today is based on four current dynamics linked to the four dimensions (economic, cultural, political and legal) on which corporate power is founded.

First, in the economic sphere, there has been a huge concentration and centralisation of power in a few multinational corporations, whose economic might exceeds that of many countries. Thus 69 of the 100 biggest economic entities worldwide in 2016 were corporations and just 31 were countries, as against a ratio of 63/37 in 2015.⁴ The market value of the ten corporations with most revenue in 2015 was moreover equivalent to the gross domestic product of the 180 countries with lowest macroeconomic performance. This makes large corporations top economic players, “too big to fail”, allowing them to take a lead role in any development process.

Second, in the cultural sphere, never before have the fields of communication, information and knowledge been so marketised, owned and controlled by large corporations.⁵ Corporations therefore control the hegemonic narrative and focus it according to their interests, highlighting its positive values (employment, investment, technological development, etc.) despite its diverse and manifest dire impacts. They also sustain an individualistic, consumerist, passive model of citizenship, in line with the low-intensity democracy in which we live (Santos, 2011).

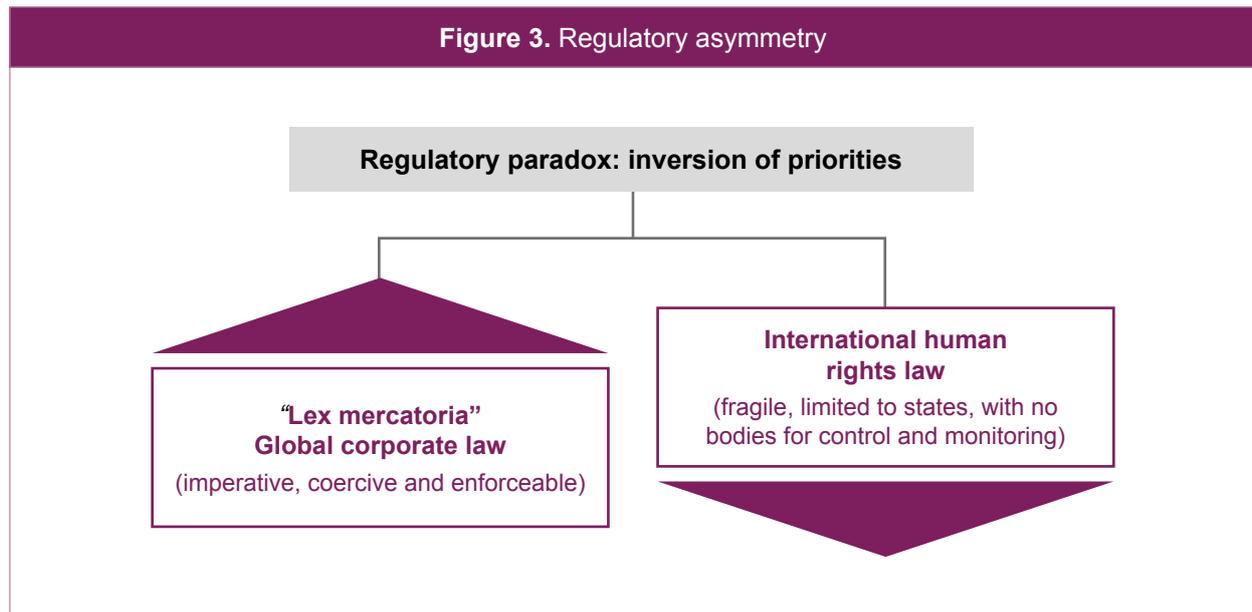
Indeed, as regards political power, multinationals have been the main beneficiaries of the growing role of global and regional arenas, far removed from ordinary citizens, where they have most capacity for influence through lobbying and systemic corruption. They have even gone a step further and taken effective direct control over certain territories, such as the “model cities” of Honduras.

Finally, corporate power in its lead role is closing the loop of political power by imposing global corporate law that is strong, enforceable, imperative and actionable, placing the security of investments above the international human rights framework. This involves using private arbitration courts to which only large corporations can apply, when they believe their profits may be impaired, along with a structure of

⁴ Data from “10 biggest corporations make more money than most countries in the world combined”, published in September 2016 by Global Justice Now.

⁵ So much so that the mass media are concentrated in six great groups: Viacom, Time Warner, News Corporation, Disney-ABC, Vivendi and Bertelsmann (Barragán, 2011).

global governance involving multilateral bodies and the home states and host states of investments and corporations.



Source: Author.

This current snapshot of corporate power gives an idea of the breadth and strength with which it is tending to encompass the whole spectrum of our lives. On the basis of economic power built up largely as from the neoliberal phase of globalisation, its brokers deploy a strategy to control cultural narratives via information, communication and knowledge. They are also leading an assault on democracy (even in its current low-intensity version), reconfiguring the global governance model in its image, ultimately sustained on an *architecture of impunity* serving its interests (Hernández & Ramiro, 2015).

This makes it the lead player of the prevailing system and social model and the chief driver of the developing hegemonic agenda. It is corporate power which starts the political machinery for the signing and implementation of regional and global trade and investment deals, seeking to definitively siphon off democracy and open up yet more markets, especially in services; which intervenes in contending for territorial hegemony and in vying for the control of common and/or strategic goods – energy, land, water, food, finance, services and knowledge; which champions financialisation as a means of reproducing capital despite its dire consequences; and which ultimately redraws and privatises political, cultural, epistemological and legal boundaries, taking an increasingly active role in all brands of systemic violence.

Accordingly corporate power must be dismantled as precondition – though insufficient in itself – for superseding the status quo. So if we are to tackle this civilisational crisis, if we are to join the struggle between capital and life in the latter's defence and to thwart the former's exclusionary and violent hegemonic agenda, we must regard transnational corporations as opponents – not the only ones, but opponents nonetheless – of any emancipatory process, and contesting them must be at the heart of emancipatory alternatives.

2. A framework agenda for dismantling corporate power

Having analysed the general situation and most notably the intensifying conflict between capital and life, and pointed to the main features and actors by which the hegemonic agenda is sought to be perpetuated, we will in our second chapter propose themes for challenging that agenda within an explicit defence of life.

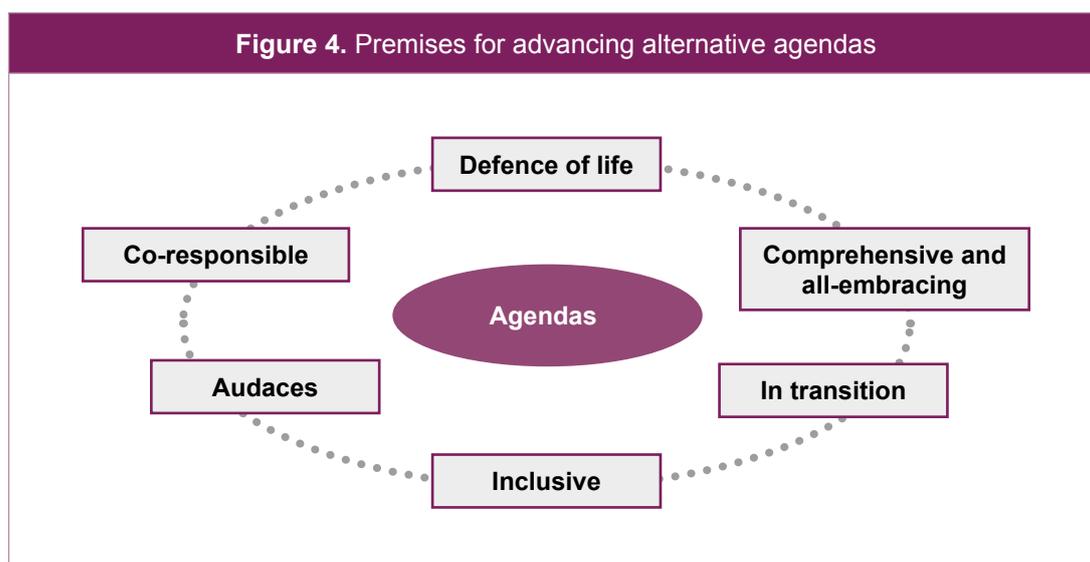
First we define six premises indicating lines along which to posit alternative agendas at this critical juncture of paradigm shift. Second, complementarily, we point to six key political aspects indicating horizons to head for and on which to focus emancipatory efforts. Finally we turn to the struggle with corporate power and set out 20 proposals which, drawing on our premises and key points, may allow us to progressively win back the ground lost to capital for the common good, work, diversity and sustainability.

The aim in a word is to construct a politico-theoretical frame of reference for dismantling corporate power, offering pointers such as *how*, *where to* and *what is to be done*. Thus our agenda is intended to boost resistance and alternatives to the power amassed by large corporations, proposing a general and comprehensive framework with reflections and initiatives for the various social and political actors. The latter would finally need to anchor our framework in their context, situation and specific capacity.

a. What premises alternatives to corporate power should set out from

Alternative agendas must meet the challenge generated by the critical time we are in, developing political strategies with a three-pronged approach: firstly drawing on the accumulated experience of historical emancipatory struggles, driven by multiple actors and agendas; secondly tackling the means and actors by which the hegemonic model is sought to be perpetuated, and thereby slowing its progress; and finally laying a basis for transcending the prevailing systemic criteria in the framework of opportunity offered by today's scenario.

To seek a lowest common denominator in this complex equation, we will now define six premises which in our view could help us devise emancipatory agendas at this paradigmatic juncture, linking past, present and future. They are themes for a particular approach to offering resistance and alternatives today along emancipatory lines, with particular reference to corporate power:



Source: Author.

1. **Agendas explicitly defending the sustainability of life.** Life – including the whole living world – is the subject to be defended, sustained and developed. So our efforts to achieve change should be in keeping with the aspects of life that encourage its reproduction. We pick out three outstanding aspects: first, life as an eco-dependent reality, finite and vulnerable; second, life as a diverse phenomenon; third, life as an interdependent process that unfolds always in community.

Thus we live in an ecologically confined space in terms of materials and resources, with physical limits that cannot be exceeded. Not every model of production, consumption and social organisation is viable or desirable and we need now to opt clearly for the models best suited to the climate and energy scenarios. Moreover as life is a diverse reality, its reproduction involves recognising and caring for this diversity. So it is vital to give value to the various approaches to wellbeing and justice, the myriad forms of knowledge and the multiplicity of actors and agendas. This requires in all events a commitment to upholding plurality and to seeking common benchmarks linking up this diversity on equal terms. And the interdependence of all forms of life leads us situate the collective sphere at the core, and from this we derive the pre-eminence of democracy, reciprocity and real active participation in all decisions affecting us directly, with the logic of a broad, plural and diverse emancipatory actor. Accordingly the agendas we advance in defence of life must take sustainability, the pursuit of equality in diversity and direct and participatory democracy as premises for contesting modern capitalism.

2. **Comprehensive, all-embracing agendas.** If the genesis of the crisis is to be found in a series of systemic values, the conflict between capital and life is not just short term but linked to systemic, comprehensive and historically rooted criteria, structures and narratives. So the emancipatory struggle should be waged in comprehensive terms addressing this whole range of elements, contesting them with new narratives and new economic and political forms of organizing life in every sphere in which the hegemonic model is reproduced. This consideration should lead us to develop broad-based strategies covering the economic, political, social, cultural, epistemological, communication and other spheres. Thus it is vital for them to be formulated multidimensionally, meeting and tackling every flank of the structure sustaining the current system.

This requires us in turn to make analyses and proposals linking the local with the global. That is, if the hegemonic agenda is rolled out globally and deployed locally, alternative agendas must be founded on defending the local sphere but also seek links at national, regional and global level. So comprehensive strategies and local/global linkage are not just necessary but urgent if we are to make progress, with cosmopolitan but rooted approaches (Tarrow, 2011), in addressing the scenarios in which capital conflicts with life.

3. **Agendas in transition.** The present crisis highlights, on one hand, the urgency of countering an unprecedented offensive that jeopardises human life. But it also requires a broad, all-embracing struggle needing more time in historical terms, and therefore a long view. Given this apparent contradiction, emancipatory agendas need to respond to immediate issues, with strategies allowing us to progressively establish and expand counter-hegemonic arenas in a context in which the critical nature of our time is not yet evident to society at large (Santiago Muiño, 2016). We believe emancipatory actors should set aside the old debate of reform versus revolution, i.e. little changes versus large transformations, and rather on both sides take up positions, progressively and cumulatively but not necessarily in a linear way, in strategies allowing us to win back the ground usurped by big business. The idea then would be to eschew strictly immediate and/or reactive responses confined to the framework of what is supposedly feasible, i.e. what modern capitalism allows, on one hand, and also any insistence on absolute, non-gradual emancipatory change on the other.

So we propose that transition be viewed in emancipatory agendas as a strategic vector, meeting the challenge of combining a response to immediate and urgent needs with a determination to move on, here and now, to other ways of life sharply divergent from the prevailing ones. This forces us to join the micro and macro levels, structural and interim issues, seeking broad systemic transformation and also personal, organisational and grassroots changes – based on a notion of emancipation as

a horizon and in turn as something going on now, thereby also politicising everyday life (Fernández, Piris & Ramiro, 2013).

4. ***Inclusive agendas.*** We see the conflict between capital and life as exemplifying the contradiction between these two terms but not as a dichotomous confrontation between abstract capital, on one hand, and humanity and the planet on the other. Thus we would define capital as a metaphor articulating a system of multiple dominance that does not end in capital in itself. Rather it projects itself as we saw above in an intricate web in which capitalism, heteropatriarchalism, coloniality, productivism and low-intensity democracy interact with diverse and conflicting actors and logics.

The contention between the hegemonic agenda and alternative agendas cannot thus be conceived from a static perspective, for the political struggle between them is complex and dynamic. On one hand, and focussing now on capital in a strict, non-metaphoric sense, capital has no single identity and rather reflects interests, contexts and dynamics that are not always aligned, though ultimately they have common features. So it is important to analyse the convergences and divergences between types of capital, in the context of reconfigured 21st century capitalism as discussed in our previous chapter.

Moreover it is vital for emancipatory proposals to meet the challenge of combating the system of multiple dominance built up around capitalism, which requires us to analyse and address the palpable asymmetries between persons, groups, communities, peoples and movements by class, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, etc., discarding any simplistic views of emancipatory processes. It is thus crucial to formulate rallying, inclusive and intersecting agendas, challenging the hegemonic life-model represented by white, heterosexual, individualistic men with public presence, supposedly self-sufficient and resourceful.

So if the goal is to supersede this model that generates exclusion and exploitation in the lives of the majority, we need to define agendas and strategies for transition based on partial, localised and concrete experiences, albeit seeking to engage jointly with a common world and to comprehensively and inclusively tackle capitalist domination – which is naturally a key target, as the systematic backbone, though the dominance is also heteropatriarchal, colonial, productivist and democratically degraded. So we advocate assembling a coordinative agenda and discourse, bringing together actors which, with shared principles, may create, deliberate, argue, bargain and reach alternative agreements with a communicative discourse, allowing such agreements to be presented, contested, deliberated and legitimated (Schmidt, 2011).

5. ***Co-responsible agendas.*** Considerations on how to focus alternative agendas should also refer to who puts them forward and is therefore the actor of change. In our view the challenge we face is of forming a broad, diverse and plural actor strong enough to overturn the prevailing status quo. In line with our affirmation of inclusiveness, the various actors should be linked in common frameworks, with the working class always as the hub of the whole. It is vital to consider which strategies and which actors may have most impact in this regard, and this is where we find the debate of power versus counter-power, i.e. prioritising either official and institutional channels or social and community-based autonomy.

Here, and given the scale of the conflict between capital and life, we believe emancipatory agendas should opt, where the conditions are present, for shared responsibility across institutions, movements and communities with dynamics that strengthen people power (Gómez, 2015). Thus, taking this last concept as a goal and indicator of progress, we set out from the key role of social and community-scale self-management as a basis for any emancipatory transition process. Yet we recognise that despite their usual alliance with hegemonic criteria, public institutions have also been and may yet be active in promoting and generating arenas favourable to people power, in a context in which the public sphere is moreover a strategic scenario of contention, as we saw above. In any event we should clarify that this preference for shared responsibility should be contextualised in each case, taking account of the capacities and aims of institutions, movements and communities, thus giving

rise to multiple possible options (among which head-on confrontation with institutions is not ruled out), but not ever based on compulsion or, by contrast, principled aloofness.

Accordingly what is needed is a mutual effort of understanding and critical analysis of the juncture we are at. Thus the dynamics of the public sphere should serve emancipatory processes (not just redistributive ones), while social and grassroots movements should take up the challenge involved in the complexity of political struggle, with localised and contextualised logics of transition.

In this regard Santos advocates a reinvention of the state, reconceived as a “brand-new social movement”, setting out from the notion that:

Neither the state principle nor the community principle can on its own, given the subjugating *hybris* of the market principle, guarantee the sustainability of non-mercantile interdependencies – in the absence of which life in society becomes a form of social fascism. This conception posits a new, preferential nexus between state principle and community principle, with the latter predominating. If the concept of reinventing the state as a business-state leads to isomorphisms between market and state, this second concept leads to isomorphisms between community and state (Santos, 2011: 269).

- 6. Bold agendas with no predetermined map.** Complexity is one of the main features of this historical moment as regards the actors involved, the variables interacting in it and the political and economic scenario. We are seeing a paradigm shift in which the bases underlying the hegemonic form of organizing life have undergone and will continue to undergo great changes.

Agendas in defence of life must therefore meet this challenge along emancipatory lines with comprehensive, inclusive and co-responsible strategies, moreover on shifting ground. For we face profound change with no certainties or dogmas allowing us to totalise or simplify this struggle between capital and life. Thus it is vital to cultivate the audacity and creativity of peoples and communities so as to address our uncertain future from a solid basis, i.e. on firmer ground allowing us to sustain processes over unmapped routes – pathways for which there are no instructions (Santiago Muiño, 2016) – enabling us to form composite alternatives, i.e. prefiguring counter-hegemonic values but also overlaid by modern capitalism.

In our next section we will seek to establish some of this firmer ground on which to advance – the horizons to be aimed at by alternatives in our frame of reference. They should in all events be projected onto bold agendas explicitly defending the reproduction of life, posited from comprehensive, all-embracing outlooks, devising strategies for transition and progressive struggle, including actors and projects with shared responsibility, and accepting uncertainty as a critical value not in any way limiting the political will to supersede modern capitalism.

b. What horizons alternatives to corporate power should be aimed at

If the premises of our previous section described the playing field for the political contest between capital and life, we will now outline the paths which we believe an emancipatory approach should follow. These, as we said, are not predetermined. But this does not lead us into relativism or, conversely, to celebrate any initiative posited from counter-hegemonic stances. No, it prompts us to seek footholds as purchase for comprehensive and inclusive strategies which, despite the inherent uncertainty, boldly tackle the hegemonic civilisational system, the prevailing model of global society and corporate power, with alternative and emancipatory values:

- 1. The local sphere as a strategic actor in alternative organisations of life.** We highlight the importance of situating the local sphere, i.e. the territorial level, as a preferred area in which to devise emancipatory economic and political formulas. We speak of the local sphere not as a mere administrative realm but as the field in which life essentially take place, in which new actors take shape, setting up their arenas and taking ownership of them materially and symbolically (Zibechi, 2007). Giving value to the local sphere as a preferential horizon to keep in our sights in no event

involves self-sufficiency systems or a return to a supposedly idyllic bygone life in community. Rather it involves the need to reprioritise the hierarchy of responsibility across local, national, regional and global levels in order, without cutting any one of them out, to review their current roles, giving the local sphere greater weight. Here we should not confuse *local* with *localism* (for this readjustment does not, as we say, mean dispensing with any sphere), and it would always involve multilevel linkage, albeit with a firm local base (Santiago Muiño, 2016). In all events, and after considering the degree of complexification linked to neoliberal globalisation, we should be heading in the opposite direction, allowing us to broaden democracy and confine economic affairs to the political sphere.

Setting out from this conception of the local sphere, we believe this is where the best conditions are to be found for rolling out new values, structures and socioeconomic practices. Thus we believe that in the local sphere (which is of course a contested realm, with its own conflicts) economic systems may be defined according to the physical limits imposed by flows of materials, energy and waste; subject to collective considerations and democratic mandates with benchmarks for the common good; limiting in this respect the private sphere and profit-making in favour of the public and community realms; putting socially necessary work before capital, with a non-capitalist treatment of the latter; and opting for economic diversity as a governing principle, progressively gaining ground for alternative economies. So we propose, as a first key point, reprioritising the scale of responsibilities away from the global and towards the local as a way of advancing alternative, de-complexified and diverse economic systems based on the common good, democracy and work, and therefore free of the primacy of maximising profit.

2. ***Democratic agendas based on people power.*** Implementing alternative forms of organising life depends in our frame of reference on a political basis consistent with this option. Thus we set out from a defence of a concept of people power consisting of:

Effective decision-making, by means of organisation and actual participation, by the great majority of a people in the basic issues concerning them (Colussi, 2007).

We thus advocate a full, non-amputated and uncurtailed version of the concept of sovereignty. Accordingly peoples, citizens and communities must be able to decide upon all issues deemed strategic. There is no people power unless it is mobilised via direct and participatory democratic processes, not limited to mere delegation to a few institutionalised arenas. It is also linked to a high degree of grassroots self-management based on autonomous, emancipated, active and critical actors forming structures not just politically but also economically, socially and culturally, with a broader view of democracy. Though this option is extensible to any sphere, it is best suited to the local realm. This is where it is most feasible, for reasons of scale, to promote direct and participatory democratic methods and to envisage self-managed economic and cultural formats. Thus our frame of reference so far combines non-profit economic approaches based locally with direct and participatory democratic formulas for developing people power.

3. ***Counter-hegemonic narratives fleshing out emancipatory values.*** Advancing new forms of organising life involves collective mentalities contesting the monolithic narrative imposed by the prevailing system, consistent with our premises favouring comprehensive, all-embracing and inclusive agendas. We thus need not only to promote alternative practices but also to engender and extend the conditions that make them feasible. This necessarily involves developing narratives challenging the systemic mantra – highlighting the inviability and injustice it involves – and pointing to the need, the viability and the resolve to follow systemic pathways opposed to the current ones.

This entails an ongoing critical and self-critical analysis of the current collective mindset and also of the criteria by which emancipatory processes are normally defined; it requires us to keep exposing our opponents' impacts, most notably those of corporate power, countering them with multiple initiatives for boycotts, Russell tribunals, etc.; and it encourages us to supplement transformative practices by opting for more liberating forms of communication – by supporting

critical and alternative media – and also of learning and knowledge by developing grassroots and community-based formulas, always with inclusive narratives facilitating mutual contagion and the growth of alternative arenas.

4. ***A radical redistribution of wealth.*** Equality in diversity is another vital benchmark in the defence of life. Rather than a paradox this is an affirmation that alternatives may be universalisable – valid and applicable for all, while also unique, suited to the situation and perspective of each particular actor (Orozco, 2014). In this connection, and directly linked to our commitment to advancing towards alternative ways of life, we believe one strategic goal is to overcome the huge current asymmetries in terms of beings, powers and kinds of knowledge. If in our frame of reference we address inequalities as a whole, here we are focussing on inequalities between enriched and impoverished, possessors and dispossessed, dominators and dominated, etc.

Thus we stress the strategic character of a radical redistribution of wealth so as to fully rework the current model of ownership and access to goods and resources. We take *wealth* in a non-orthodox sense as referring not just to the individual accumulation of material goods but also to all that is liable to provide for a full life lived in harmony with the natural environment. Redistribution so defined involves wresting arenas, structures and sectors away from profit-making, markets and constant capital flows, with logics of demarketisation and demonetisation progressively giving centrality to the collective sphere and keeping common and/or strategic goods (water, land, energy, transport, finance, knowledge, etc.) away from profit. It also involves robust public action in defence of legislation on the rights of individuals and peoples, regulating and actively engaging in the economic and political sphere (taxation, debt, public procurement, etc.), adjusting to and enhancing diversity, and prioritising the combating of all forms of exclusion. We thereby envisage an emancipatory horizon which, setting out from the recognition and reproduction of diversity, contributes to equality with a thorough redistribution of property and access to wealth based on the primacy of the common sphere.

5. ***A radical redistribution of work.*** There is also an evident asymmetry in the distribution of types of work and working times. Here too we set out from a wider sense of *work* than mere employment on the market, including all work socially necessary for sustaining life. Thus if work is a core value of our alternative societal project, it must be given dignity, whether carried out on the market or in the community or in homes, and always with an emancipatory, non-reactionary outlook (Orozco, 2014).

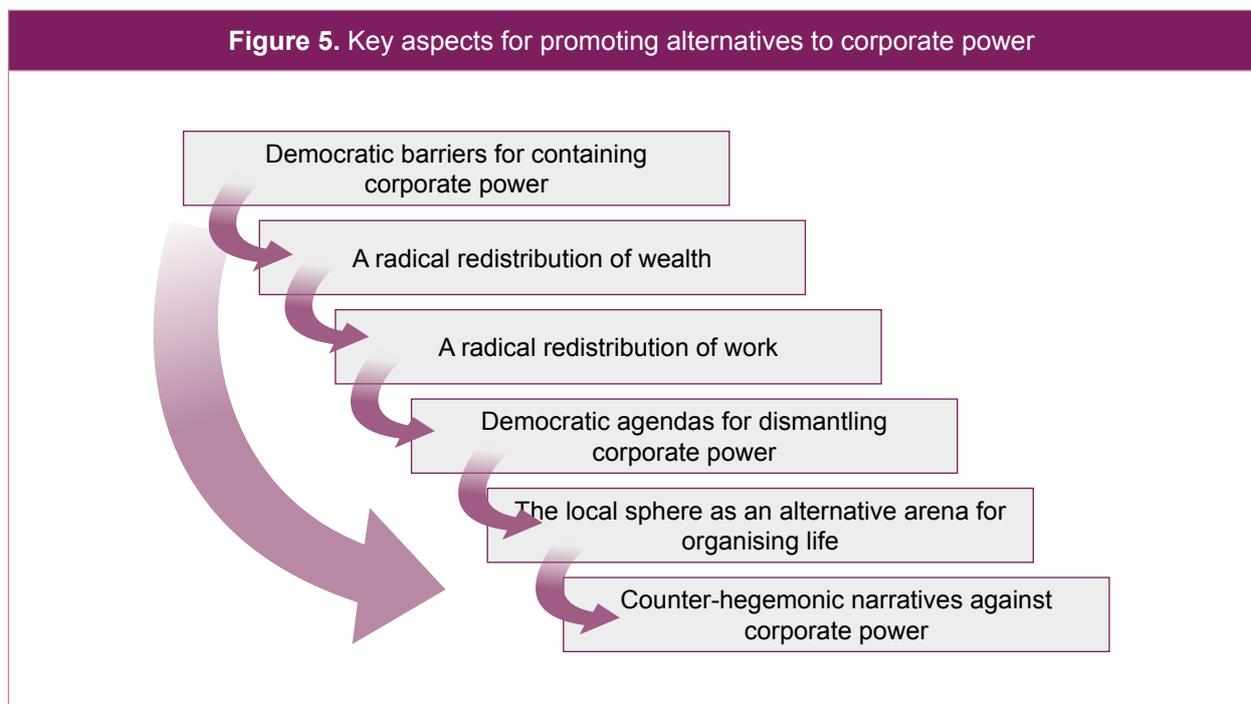
Work also needs to be radically redistributed, which means reapportioning jobs fairly on the basis of a thorough democratisation of the various spheres of work – especially in homes and companies – so as to overcome the huge class, gender and other asymmetries in place today. This democratisation must also concern the international division of labour which, albeit not static or permanent, condemns many peoples, countries and regions to situations of economic dependency and particular vulnerability, whereas what is needed is to develop autonomous and sovereign options. Thus a redistribution of work aimed at overcoming profound colonial, gender and class asymmetries is another strategic aspect of our frame of reference.

6. ***Critical and active social mobilisation against the status quo.*** Finally we will be unable to move on towards the horizons envisaged in our frame of reference without strong social mobilisation, with a broad critical consciousness challenging the key aspects of the hegemonic model and seeking horizons beyond those of the prevailing collective mindset. Thus our whole proposed alternative depends on linking and spreading multiple, diverse struggles and resistances contesting the current system and its lead player – corporate power – as well as eschewing ways out of this systemic crisis involving violence and exclusion, instead preferring participation and social mobilisation as prime alternative values.

So these six key points configure our frame of reference for promoting alternative agendas. It is angled at a horizon in which the local sphere has a strategic role in pursuing new political and economic forms of organising life revolving around sustainability, people power, the common good, work and diversity, i.e. as values contesting the centrality of the current benchmarks of markets, capital and maximisation of profit. Progress in this regard will be linked to gaining ground by generalising alternative models and also

to counter-hegemonic narratives making such pathways seem viable, liable to be grasped by a broad majority, directly delegitimising the status quo and involving communication media and also traditional and critical forms of knowledge. And finally such emancipatory projects must be accompanied by firm resistance and social mobilisation together with a radical redistribution of wealth and work which should revitalise the debate over our collective aims and overcome inequalities of class, gender and race/ethnicity, allowing us to meet the systemic challenge of the conflict of capital versus life in favourable conditions.

Now that we have defined the key points of our frame of reference we will rearrange them according to a logic of transition and anchor them specifically in the struggle with corporate power. The thread of our logic will be intensity of contention with the hegemonic agenda, i.e. the will and capacity associated with each aspect for advancing initiatives countering the prevailing agenda. Thus we restructure those aspects according to three criteria of rising intensity. First is *resistance*, i.e. barriers for containing that agenda; second is *regulation*, limiting its key players' capacity to act so as to protect the common good; third is *alternative*, prefiguring other ways of living, albeit, as we said, with a composite character and therefore also overlaid by neoliberal capitalist rationale (Ramiro, 2016).



Source: Author.

Following the resistance-regulation-alternative sequence⁶, we include in *resistance* a critical and active social mobilisation against the status quo which, as we said, we see as a foundation for positing alternative criteria, preventing further spheres from being dispossessed by capital. As regards corporate power, we point specifically to the need to block mega-development projects and stand up to the structures and bodies forming the corporate global governance model (IMF, World Bank, trade and investment deals, etc.).

As to the realm of *regulation*, the key points here are a radical redistribution of wealth and of work, notably including the vital role to be played by institutions in this regard, pursuing public policies that regulate for the common good and even encourage emancipatory arenas for promoting diverse people power.

⁶ In any event, and despite the ordering by degree of contentious intensity, this is not necessarily a linear process or one in which each point is autonomous – indeed the degree of correlation between them all is high. But this allows us to progressively organise the various items in a strategy for structural transformation.

Specifically there is a need to focus on spheres directly linked to corporate wealth such as the ownership and management of common and/or strategic goods, taxation, debt and public procurement, or to defending work in a broad sense, combining a defence of a dignifying framework in labour-market relations with a local-global approach, seeking to democratise and give value to care work from an emancipatory perspective.

Following our sequence, we place the pursuit of democratic agendas based on people power as a fourth key point, with one foot in the sphere of regulation and another in that of alternative. Regulation is involved in that it means dismantling the agenda and the structure of low-intensity democratic governance under which we live, and alternative in that it means opting for the construction of real democratic processes on the ground. Such is the political basis of our last two key points (now clearly in the realm of *alternative*) involving promoting and linking up both emancipatory economic propositions and counter-hegemonic narratives contesting the centrality of capitalist markets and the players in them, while exposing the impacts of the business of multinational companies and opening up paths of opportunity for alternatives.

This in short is our frame of reference for promoting alternatives to corporate power, setting out from the pursuit of comprehensive, all-embracing, inclusive, co-responsible and bold agendas that explicitly defend life in its struggle with capital. On this basis we point to a strategic horizon to head for, characterised by resistance and social mobilisation against multinationals and their network of governance, by public regulation so as to establish the primacy of popular sovereignty and collective wellbeing over the current corporate impunity, and finally by a commitment to developing new systems and narratives for organising life, allowing people power to win back ground and ultimately to dismantle the power amassed by multinationals. In line with this strategic approach to how and where to promote alternatives, below we will define priorities for action against large corporations.

c. What is to be done to dismantle corporate power

We end our case for the dismantling of corporate power by detailing 20 proposals directly linked to the frame of reference outlined in this chapter. Our proposals thus point to a comprehensive, all-encompassing, co-responsible and inclusive struggle in the defence of life against the power built up by transnational companies, with a logic of transition, i.e. from resistance to regulation to alternative. Each proposal in turn relates directly to at least one of our six key points defining the emancipatory horizons to head for, as described in the following table:

Figure 6. 20 proposals for a framework agenda against corporate power

Key points	Transition	Proposals
Democratic barriers for containing corporate power	Resistance	Grassroots mobilisation against mega-development projects
	Resistance	Halting the advance of the corporate global governance model
A radical redistribution of wealth	Regulation	Defence of the common sphere: demarketisation of common and/or strategic goods
	Regulation	Comprehensive land reform against corporate land grabs
	Regulation	Tightening up on corporate tax avoidance and evasion
	Regulation	Non-payment of illegal, illegitimate, odious and unsustainable debt
	Regulation	Commitment to socially responsible public procurement (SRPP)
A radical redistribution of work	Regulation	Advocacy of a local-global framework for decent labour relations
	Regulation	Dignification and democratisation of care work
Democratic agendas for dismantling corporate power	Regulation	A global regulatory framework on transnational companies and human rights
	Alternative	The local sphere as a political actor in alternative organisations of life
The local sphere as an economic actor in alternative organisations of life	Alternative	Towards energy sovereignty as a common good
	Alternative	Care at the core of the community
	Alternative	Production based on work for the common good
	Alternative	Lower and responsible consumption
	Alternative	Towards ethical banking
Counter-hegemonic narratives against corporate power	Alternative	Democratisation of media: diverse and not corporatised
	Alternative	Exposing and advocating against corporate power
	Alternative	Popular knowledge for decorporatised living
	Alternative	Towards localised agendas and strategies against corporate power

Source: Author.

Below we expand on the thrust of each of the 20 proposals in our framework agenda for contesting corporate power:⁷

1. **Grassroots mobilisation against mega-development projects.** Seeking to resist the advance of megaprojects promoted by large corporations so as to defend the local environment and common resources on the basis of comprehensive strategies combining social mobilisation, direct democracy processes, social cohesion in diversity, local-global linkage, resilience and the projection of narratives alternative to those of the transnational network.

⁷ The specifics of these proposals are based on an analysis of 30 direct initiatives pursued in recent years by various agents in Latin America and Europe, as described in Fernández (2016).

2. ***Halting the advance of corporate global governance.*** Undermining the corporate democracy model by resisting and/or rolling back its main features (trade and investment deals in force or in negotiation) and cutting links with its chief agents (the World Bank, the IMF, arbitration tribunals, etc.), with sovereign and unilateral decisions where necessary.
3. ***Defence of the common sphere: demarketisation of common and/or strategic goods.*** Contesting the centrality of markets and capital through processes which not only favour public as against private ownership but which also regulate so as to encourage a public/grassroots approach de-commodifying common and strategic goods (energy, transport, finance, food, etc.), while upholding direct democracy in decision-making.
4. ***Comprehensive land reform against corporate land grabs.*** Involving putting an end to the land-grab crisis within a defence of land as a strategic common good, with land reform processes linked to the food sovereignty agenda.
5. ***Tightening up on corporate tax avoidance and evasion.*** Seeking to establish worldwide fiscal control of large corporations by providing a global structure for monitoring them and a global annual reporting obligation by corporate group, putting an end to tax havens, arbitrary transfer prices and investment incentive schemes and introducing an international tax on financial transactions. We also advocate boosting the ability of public finance departments to apply progressive taxation, linked to the environment and with a strong penalty system for corporations and large fortunes.
6. ***Non-payment of illegal, illegitimate, odious and unsustainable debt.*** Advocating popular audits to clarify the nature of debt, facilitating the non-payment of debt considered illegal, illegitimate and odious. The resulting total debt should be restructured, if unsustainable, in multilateral protocolised forums, thereby avoiding involvement by vulture funds.
7. ***Commitment to socially responsible public procurement.*** Highlighting the role of public procurement as a tool for regulating and promoting specific alternatives, opting for the mandatory inclusion of clauses of various kinds (on employment, integration, equality between women and men, the environment, etc.), which will in turn promote food sovereignty processes and alternative-economy systems.
8. ***A local-global framework for decent labour relations.*** Treating work as a systemic source of value, with international labour regulations that are enforceable, actionable and mandatory. The aim is in turn to boost trade unionism, global collective bargaining for corporate groups as a whole – overturning the false dichotomy between parent companies and subsidiaries – and public involvement in preventing relocations.
9. ***Dignification and democratisation of care work.*** Proposing a broad view of the concept of work, embracing all tasks necessary to sustaining life. On this basis we envisage regulation for dignification and democratisation from perspectives combining demarketisation, public involvement in all kinds of care-giving and a reflection on the gender asymmetries associated with care work, intersecting in turn with asymmetries of class and ethnicity/race.
10. ***A global regulatory framework on transnational companies and human rights.*** Advocating in particular for regulation in the relationship between large corporations and human rights, including a critical review of such rights and seeking an enforceable, actionable and codified treaty applying not just to states but also to social and business actors, upholding and safeguarding principles such as universal jurisdiction, extraterritoriality, joint and several liability and dual indictment.

11. ***The local sphere as a political actor in alternative organisations of life.*** Moving on from regulation to alternative, we propose reworking and broadening democracy by promoting direct and participatory democratic formulas, with the generation of new institutional frameworks for people power and democratic sovereignty over the local sphere and common and/or strategic goods.
12. ***Towards energy sovereignty as a common good.*** Pointing to the need for and urgency of decarbonising our energy system, demarketising the sector with a public/community approach and rethinking local economic models with a logic of energy transition.
13. ***Care at the core of the community.*** Advocating extending the logic of community-based self-management geared to people power, demarketising and demonetising living relationships and placing care-giving at the heart of the whole emancipatory process.
14. ***Economic production based on work for the common good.*** Seeking a transition, with support for forms of alternative economy in defence of decent work, democracy, the common good and sustainability, towards linked-up systems contesting the field with capitalist markets, based on a co-responsible approach.
15. ***Lower and responsible consumption.*** Moving towards lower levels of consumption – without ignoring global North/global South asymmetries and those between consumption for reproducing life and that for reproducing markets – democratically planned as well as responsible in the regulatory dimension.
16. ***Towards ethical banking.*** Seeking a reversal of financial deregulation and complexification, opting for public/community ownership and management, embedded and co-involved at local level and in alternative economic systems.
17. ***Democratisation of media: diverse and not corporatised.*** Positing communication as a right, preventing media concentration and marketisation by promoting grassroots and/or alternative media, backed by legality and active public policy.
18. ***Exposing and advocating against corporate power.*** Stressing a denunciation of the impacts of large corporations in multiple forms such as awareness campaigns, boycotts, peoples' tribunals, etc., as a means of generating a critical awareness in the public at large.
19. ***Popular knowledge for decorporatised living.*** Proposing an ecology of knowledge giving value to various knowledge systems, supporting public, corporate-free universities, political advocacy and popular education.
20. ***Towards localised agendas and strategies against corporate power.*** Finally, seeking to devise and implement strategies to counter transnational corporations, including a great range of initiatives with a joined-up, comprehensive and transitional approach, as the best way of moving forward towards dismantling corporate power.

Figure 7. 20 proposals and 90 political measures for a framework agenda**Proposal 1: Grassroots mobilisation against mega-development projects**

1. Promoting sustained social mobilisations
2. Engaging in community cohesion and linking up of diversity
3. Developing direct democracy processes
4. Local-global linkage
5. Legal defence of the local sphere
6. Proposing community resilience strategies

Proposal 2: Halting the advance of the corporate global governance model

7. Blocking new regional and global trade and investment deals and not signing up to existing ones
8. Revoking current bilateral investment treaties and not signing new ones
9. Rejecting and withdrawing from the multilateral structures serving the hegemonic agenda
10. Engaging in the building of new alternative regional integration structures

Proposal 3: Defence of the common sphere and demarketisation

11. Preventing the marketisation of public companies and sectors
12. Promoting direct democracy processes against marketisation
13. Defending the public system of rights, services and social protection
14. Demarketising strategic sectors and companies
15. Remunicipalising common and/or strategic goods

Proposal 4: Comprehensive land reform against corporate land grabs

16. Mobilisation and peaceful land occupations
17. Expropriating land that has been grabbed
18. Establishing food sovereignty as a constitutional priority
19. Revoking regional policies favouring agribusiness
20. Applying comprehensive political strategies for land reform in terms of land sovereignty

Proposal 5: Tightening up on corporate tax avoidance and evasion

21. Establishing mandatory annual reporting by corporate group
22. Creating a global fiscal control and monitoring structure and system
23. Bolstering the capacities of public finance departments and toughening the penalty system
24. Regulating transfer prices
25. Outlawing tax havens
26. Developing a tax on financial transactions
27. Ending investment incentive schemes
28. Advocating for progressive taxation committed to the environment

Proposal 6: Non-payment of illegal, illegitimate and unsustainable debt

29. Strengthening local, national, regional and global networks linking up social movements against debt
30. Conducting citizens' audits of debt
31. Repudiating and not paying illegal, illegitimate, odious and unsustainable debt
32. Restructuring legal unsustainable debt in an orderly multilateral framework

Proposal 7: Commitment to socially responsible public procurement

33. Advancing towards mandatory social clauses
34. Extending the social clause concept in inclusive terms
35. Seeking to support solidarity economy and food sovereignty processes
36. Boosting socially responsible public procurement in the local sphere
37. Extending socially responsible public procurement to all institutional spheres

Proposal 8: A local-global framework for decent labour relations

38. Bolstering bottom-up, combative trade unionism
39. Developing global collective bargaining for whole corporate groups
40. Preventing international subcontracting/outsourcing and relocation
41. Opting for employment frameworks more favourable to workers
42. Seeking the adoption of a binding treaty on transnational corporations and human rights, including a mandatory global labour relations framework

Proposal 9: Dignification and democratisation of care-giving

43. Encouraging critical discussion, collective reflection and new outlooks on care-giving
44. Establishing measures on shared responsibility for work
45. Pursuing public policies encouraging the personal choice to work in fields linked to dependent care
46. Dignifying and giving value to care work in the private sector through social clauses linked to socially responsible public procurement
47. Demarketising the field of care within a defence of the common sphere
48. Proposing comprehensive strategies taking a broad view of care-giving

Proposal 10: A global regulatory framework on transnational companies and human rights

49. Backing international networks seeking the regulation of transnational corporations
50. Adopting an enforceable, actionable, codified international treaty, within a critical, updated review of the human rights concept
51. Extending international legality to cover new actors and highlighting values such as universal jurisdiction, extraterritoriality, joint and several liability and dual indictment
52. Setting up a world court on transnational corporations and human rights, and a public centre for the control of multinational corporations

Proposal 11: The local sphere as a political actor in alternative organisations of life

- 53. Implementing forms of local direct democracy
- 54. Implementing forms of local participatory democracy
- 55. Encouraging autonomous social and community initiatives
- 56. Promoting new institutional frameworks for people power and democratic sovereignty over the local sphere and common and/or strategic goods

Proposal 12: Towards energy sovereignty as a common good

- 57. Outlawing energy megaprojects
- 58. Decarbonising the energy system
- 59. Demarketising the energy sector so as to encourage a public/community-based alliance
- 60. Rethinking our economic model with a logic of energy transition

Proposal 13: Care at the core of the community

- 61. Fostering non-profit associations in the field of care-giving
- 62. Promoting time banks
- 63. Engaging with collective intergenerational and parenting care networks
- 64. Encouraging popular forums with community-based self-management
- 65. Promoting local collective democratic planning processes with care as a key aspect

Proposal 14: Economic production based on work for the common good

- 66. Encouraging economic projects based on alternative principles
- 67. Social and political advocacy for an alternative economy
- 68. Engaging with and encouraging alternative economic strategies, programmes and systems
- 69. Advocating for shared public responsibility in promoting comprehensive alternative economic strategies and programmes

Proposal 15: Lower and responsible consumption

- 70. Social and political advocacy for public policies to encourage lower and more responsible consumption
- 71. Engaging with short supply chains
- 72. Engaging with and encouraging alternative economic systems in which responsible consumption is a strategic element

Proposal 16: Towards ethical banking

- 73. Regulating the financial sector: increasing shareholders' equity, a ban on socialising losses, unlimited liability for large shareholders, etc.
- 74. Restructuring the banking sector by reducing its size, hiving off deposit and investment banks and providing a regulatory framework for banking products
- 75. Eradicating rent-seeking and speculation by banning derivatives and their securitisation
- 76. Seeking an end to banking secrecy
- 77. Using bank finance for public expenditure
- 78. Affirming banking as a common good, with a public and social/community-based structure
- 79. Engaging with alternative-economy systems, with backing for ethical banking

Proposal 17: Democratisation of media: diverse and not corporatised

- 80. Constitutionally enshrining the right to communication
- 81. Seeking a fair distribution of frequencies between the private, public and community/social sectors
- 82. Providing comprehensive support programmes for alternative media
- 83. Engaging with alternative media processes driven by grassroots approaches

Proposal 18: Exposing and advocating against corporate power

- 84. Engaging with and encouraging global networks specifically combating the power amassed by transnational corporations
- 85. Engaging with and encouraging awareness, advocacy and boycott campaigns vis-à-vis transnational corporations
- 86. Engaging with and encouraging people's tribunal initiatives against corporate power as a political and pedagogical tool

Proposal 19: Popular knowledge for decorporatised living

- 87. Supporting public, high-quality universities for all, free of transnational corporations
- 88. Promoting arenas for emancipatory education within public universities
- 89. Engaging with and encouraging centres and social arenas for research, training and political advocacy on corporate power
- 90. Engaging with and encouraging experiences, processes and arenas for popular education, as a strategic tool for emancipatory learning for peoples and social movements

Proposal 20: Towards localised agendas and strategies against corporate power

Source: Author.

In short, the 6 premises, 6 key points, 20 proposals and 90 political measures of our framework agenda form a thread for piecing together a challenge to corporate power. But as we said, it is not meant to be the sole agenda, and it needs to be anchored to various contexts and in the capacities of diverse actors. So it is an input aimed at encouraging reflection and action against the power built up by transnational corporations, pointing to pathways towards civilisational alternatives. A point along the way, not a point of arrival.

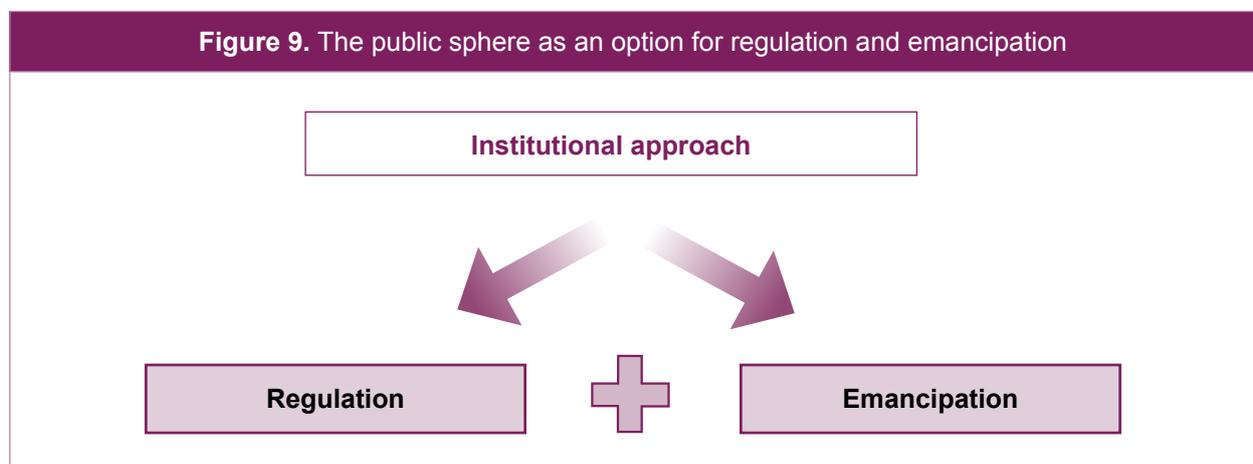
3. Recommendations for dismantling corporate power

The framework agenda synthesised in our previous chapter is based, *inter alia*, on shared responsibility. It appeals in this respect to an array of social and political actors to act, preferably in a joined-up way, to dismantle corporate power. The main aim of this last part of our paper is to elaborate this collective appeal by proposing specific political initiatives for actors regarded as strategic. The idea is to finally drill down the proposals and measures of our agenda into the core capacities and responsibilities of actors with especially significant roles to play in standing up against large corporations.



Source: Author.

We believe that highly significant roles in contesting the power amassed by transnational corporations are currently to be played by national governments, local governments and citizens at large. The first two actors, despite the transformation undergone in the course of neoliberal globalisation, are not and indeed cannot be strangers to defending the common good, democracy and, in a word, sustainable life. For the public sphere, as we said, is also a theatre of struggle in which large corporations seek to undermine the character of institutions originally established in the general interest, and so contention with corporate power is a task intrinsic to their nature. Here, and in keeping with the critical juncture we are at, the tiers of government need to take a dual approach combining *regulation* – delimiting and controlling the framework for companies and markets – and *emancipation* – promoting new ways of organising life in this systemic crisis (Santos, 2014).



Source: Author.

And if the role of public institutions is vital, that of social movements is no less so. It is they that most widely and forcefully lead the advocacy of emancipatory agendas for a systemic transition, and so they, in their diversity, are strategic actors in the struggle to radically transform the values, structures and dynamics that have brought us to this historic impasse. For they are the sharp end of direct contention with corporate power and engage in resistance, advocacy for regulation and the building of alternatives, i.e. all along the thread of our framework agenda. Ultimately it is ourselves as social majorities, as a plural, broad, diverse subject organised around the working class, who, exercising our political, economic, social and cultural sovereignty and autonomy, have the potential – the responsibility – to dismantle corporate power.

Before setting out a series of recommendations for each of the actors addressed, we should consider a few aspects to clarify the approach taken:

1. These recommendations must necessarily be anchored in each actor's situation, position, context and capacities. For they are general suggestions arising from concrete experiences, but valueless if not adapted to particular circumstances;
2. Our recommendations revolve around a transitional approach from *resistance* to *regulation* to *alternative*, which must also necessarily be adapted in each case. So our framework agenda offers a thread to help take an overall view while needing to be redefined in embodied and localised political strategies;
3. Our recommendations relate chiefly to the specific responsibilities and capacities of each actor. This does not mean that the linking of strategies with an approach of shared responsibility is not key to our proposal for dismantling corporate power. It is a question of clarifying responsibilities, not removing the need for the strategic pursuit of co-responsible articulation. Thus many of our proposals may be more useful and effective for linked actors of like or diverse natures.
4. These recommendations are meant to sketch a way forward, i.e. as part of a dynamic, open and ongoing process, so rather than a destination they are a point along the way. What is needed here is a continual critical exercise with continuous inputs, and materialisation in concrete strategies.

On these premises we will now detail the 20 proposals of our framework agenda in recommendations for our four categories of actor, threaded with a logic of systemic transition.

a. Recommendations for national governments

National governments play a key role in the structure of world governance, as well as being a necessary part of local-global linkage. Thus they underpin the regional and multilateral fabric which, as we said, multinational companies target in consolidating and extending their power. Moreover states delimit the autonomy and capacity of the local sphere and its institutions for putting forward alternatives, precisely where the conflict between capital and life is most in evidence. So national governments have notable potential and responsibility in the struggle against corporate power.

To this end, as remarked above, we need to forge a twin complementary approach of regulation and emancipation. Here national governments, especially if linked up internationally, may play a clear role in defending a bare minimum of democracy to roll back the hegemony of capitalist economics over politics, regaining ground for democracy and the general interest. But states should also now take an emancipatory approach in promoting alternative ways of organising life. Thus they are responsible for devising and applying policies to widen the field for an economy based on work, the common good, diversity and sustainability, with particular emphasis on energy transition. And nor can they ignore the need to rectify the current global-local asymmetry by seeking a new world governance based on direct and participatory democracy, wholly free of corporate control, promoting the local sphere as a strategic arena.

Accordingly national governments are actors with the ability to resist and regulate – their role in this regard is vital. But they can also envisage alternative economic and political horizons, given the central role they still hold on the international stage.

On these premises, and always keeping in mind the need for concepts to be anchored to diverse contexts and situations, we recommend the following to national governments:

Proposal I, *Grassroots mobilisation against mega-development projects*

- Tightening employment, environmental, social, energy and other legislation in line with the international human rights framework and emancipatory agendas;
- Removing all kinds of public assistance for attracting investments to megaprojects;
- Not granting exploration permits or construction licences for megaprojects.

Proposal II, *Halting the advance of corporate global governance*

- Withdrawing from the architecture of impunity, revoking all current bilateral and regional trade and investment deals; rejecting the adoption of new regional and global treaties such as TTIP, TPP, CETA, TISA, etc.;
- Severing ties with the chief agents upholding corporate power such as the IMF and arbitration tribunals, e.g. the World Bank ICSID;
- Advocating for an overhaul and/or radical redefinition of regional structures (European Union, Andean Community, etc.) in defence of life, democracy, the common good and sustainability, without ruling out unilateral measures.

Proposal III, *Defence of the common sphere and demarketisation of common and/or strategic goods*

- Promoting referendums and direct democracy processes on the ownership and management of common and strategic goods;
- Strengthening the public system of services and social protection with a new emancipatory approach in the common sphere;
- Demarketising companies and industries linked to common goods (water, energy, knowledge, health, education, food, etc.) and strategic goods (finance, transport, etc.).

Proposal IV, *Comprehensive land reform against corporate land grabs*

- As a political horizon, constitutionally enshrining the right to food and food sovereignty;
- Expropriating land appropriated in land grabs, for use in alternative economic systems;
- Withdrawing from and advocating against regional pro-agribusiness measures such as the Common Agricultural Policy or the US Farm Bill;
- Advancing in land reform processes with a joined-up approach and taking food sovereignty as a benchmark, distributing land fairly and promoting a model based on small-farm economies, agroecology and people power.

Proposal V, *Tightening up on corporate tax avoidance and evasion*

- Boosting the capacity of public finance departments and strengthening penalty systems;
- Providing a progressive tax policy linked to the local sphere, addressing the issue of transfer prices and ending investment promotion schemes;
- Requiring mandatory global annual tax reporting from each corporate group in order to operate on the country's territory;

- Advocating for a global taxation structure for large corporations;
- Advocating for an end to tax havens;
- Advocating for an international tax on financial transactions.

Proposal VI, *Non-payment of illegal, illegitimate, odious and unsustainable debt*

- Promoting a citizens' audit of debt;
- Not paying illegal, illegitimate and odious debt, and providing an alternative economic strategy;
- Advocating for the adoption of a multilateral debt negotiation framework and system that is mandatory for all creditors along the lines of the Argentine proposal submitted in September 2014 to the UN General Assembly, and seeking to prevent the involvement of vulture funds;
- Proposing the restructuring of unsustainable debt, where applicable, within a multilateral framework that is mandatory for each creditor.

Proposal VII, *Commitment to socially responsible public procurement*

- Including social, employment and environmental clauses as a compulsory aspect of all public procurement processes;
- Prioritising the promotion of food sovereignty and alternative economic processes in all of their forms (solidarity, community-based or people's economies, worker-recovered businesses, etc.);
- Establishing a national monitoring and penalty system for terms of public procurement.

Proposal VIII, *A local-global framework for decent labour relations*

- Reversing labour market reforms that impair labour rights;
- Guaranteeing all labour rights contained in international labour legislation;
- Providing legislation and active policies to encourage trade unionism;
- Promoting collective bargaining systems within a defence of work as a source of value, in the spheres of responsibility most favourable to workers;
- Removing relocation assistance and sanctioning relocation;
- Seeking the adoption of a binding treaty on transnational corporations and human rights prioritising employment aspects.

Proposal IX, *Dignification and democratisation of care work*

- Pursuing policies involving shared responsibility for work;
- Pursuing public policies encouraging the personal choice to work in areas linked to dependent care;
- Dignifying and giving value to care work in the private sector through social clauses linked to socially responsible public procurement;
- Demarketising the field of care within a defence of the common sphere;
- Putting forward comprehensive strategies taking a broad view of care-giving.

Proposal X, *A global regulatory framework on transnational companies and human rights*

- Seeking the adoption of a binding treaty on transnational corporations and human rights;

- Supporting the creation of a world court on transnational corporations and human rights;
- Supporting the creation of a centre for the control of transnational corporations.

Proposal XI, *The local sphere as a political actor in alternative organisations of life*

- Explicitly supporting decentralisation processes for local autonomy and sovereignty with a joined-up approach (responsibilities, taxation, budget, etc.);
- Opting for direct democracy processes in every possible form, especially in defence of the local sphere and of common and strategic goods;
- Developing participatory democracy processes in planning, budgeting, etc.

Proposal XII, *Towards energy sovereignty as a common good*

- Outlawing energy megaprojects;
- Decarbonising the energy system by pursuing active policies for renewable energies;
- Demarketising the industry by nationalising it and promoting a new public/community-based energy alliance;
- Redefining political priorities from a joined-up perspective in terms of energy sovereignty and transition.

Proposal XIV, *Economic production based on work for the common good*

- Enshrining economic diversity as a value in the constitution, with particular stress on alternative systems free of the profit motive;
- Pursuing joined-up public policies for economic diversity, not just as sectoral policies;
- Adapting economic regulations so as to take a wider view of diverse economic systems;
- Using public procurement to encourage alternative-economy projects based on work, the common good, democracy and sustainability.

Proposal XV, *Lower and responsible consumption*

- Restricting large retail stores and other mass consumer outlets in favour of local traders;
- Restricting advertising;
- Regulating in favour of responsible consumption of energy and materials (packaging, recycling systems, etc.).

Proposal XVI, *Towards ethical banking*

- Regulating the financial sector: increasing shareholders' equity, a ban on socialising losses, unlimited liability for big shareholders, etc.;
- Restructuring the banking sector by reducing its size, hiving off deposit and investment banks and providing a regulatory framework for banking products;
- Eradicating rent-seeking and speculation by banning derivatives and their securitisation;
- Seeking to put an end to banking secrecy;
- Emphasising bank finance for public expenditure;
- Affirming banking as a common good, with a public and social/community-based structure;
- Engaging with alternative-economy systems, with backing for ethical banking;

Proposal XVII, *Democratisation of media: diverse and not corporatised*

- Constitutionally enshrining the right to communication;
- Regulating for a democratisation of communication media by establishing fair minimum and maximum shares for private, public and social/community-based initiatives;
- Establishing structures to ensure that the media recognise, uphold and highlight diversity;
- Supporting social/community-based projects with joined-up public policies;

Proposal XVIII, *Exposing and advocating against corporate power*

- Taking part in exposing and sanctioning the impacts of corporations with their parent in the country, with an extraterritorial logic.

Proposal XIX, *Popular knowledge for decorporatised living*

- Guaranteeing the autonomy of public universities free of transnational corporations and emphasising emancipatory education;
- Supporting social initiatives for critical research and advocacy on corporate power.

Proposal XX, *Towards localised agendas and strategies against corporate power*

- Planning a comprehensive, transitional strategy for the progressive dismantling of corporate power.

b. Recommendations for local governments

As the basis of our agenda's politico-theoretical frame of reference, all actors operating in the local sphere have a key role, especially given that the local arena is usually where corporate power and alternative agendas collide directly. Public institutions should take part in this struggle, developing to the utmost – according to their capacities – a complementary approach of regulation and emancipation. Emancipation, i.e. pursuing policies to advance the six key points defining the horizons of our frame of reference, has special significance at local level, for as we said, we regard it as a prime sphere. So we call on local public institutions to engage in earnest in generating arenas for systemic transition.

Thus, and in line with our premises in the introduction to this last chapter, we now focus on proposals that would normally depend on the sub-national sphere. As to those depending on national, regional and global spheres, we believe local institutions should address all such aspects of our framework agenda, though we do not detail them here as the aim is to clarify spheres of responsibility. With this proviso we recommend the following:

Proposal I, *Grassroots mobilisation against mega-development projects*

- Not granting exploration permits or construction licences;
- Organising a public/social strategy for defending territories against megaprojects;
- Developing direct democracy experiences linked to megaprojects;
- Spearheading the legal defence in national and international arenas against megaprojects;
- Removing all kinds of public assistance for attracting investments to megaprojects.

Proposal II, *Halting the advance of corporate global governance*

- Declaring the local sphere to be opposed to and free from trade and investment deals and the “architecture of impunity”;

- Advocating a regional governance in which the local sphere has a prime role.

Proposal III, Defence of the common sphere and demarketisation of common and/or strategic goods

- Promoting referendums and direct democracy processes on the ownership and management of common and strategic goods;
- Strengthening the public system of services and social protection with a new emancipatory approach to the common sphere;
- Remunicipalising companies and industries linked to common goods (water, energy, food, urban waste, etc.) and strategic goods (finance, transport, etc.), including formulas for the defence of the common sphere such as mixed cooperatives.

Proposal IV, Comprehensive land reform against corporate land grabs

- Expropriating land appropriated in land grabs;
- Promoting publicly owned land for social purposes linked to the common good and to community-scale projects (earth banks, usufruct assignments for food sovereignty and alternative economic initiatives, etc.);
- Developing urban development plans or similar that prevent speculation, encourage food and energy sovereignty and keep a balance between land and soil.

Proposal V, Tightening up on corporate tax avoidance and evasion

- Establishing a progressive system of rates and taxes – such as on property and economic activity – applying especially to large retail stores and corporations;
- Establishing discounts in tax rates for activities linked to the common good (energy transition, urban waste, etc.);
- Removing all grants, deductions and exemptions for large stores and corporations.

Proposal VI, Non-payment of illegal, illegitimate, odious and unsustainable debt

- Promoting a citizens' audit of debt;
- Not paying illegal, illegitimate and odious debt, and providing an alternative economic strategy.

Proposal VII, Commitment to socially responsible public procurement

- Including social, employment and environmental clauses as a compulsory aspect of all public procurement processes;
- Prioritising the promotion of food sovereignty and alternative economic processes in all their forms (solidarity, community-based or people's economies, worker-recovered businesses, etc.);
- Establishing a local monitoring and penalty system for terms of public procurement.

Proposal VIII, A local-global framework for decent labour relations

- Guaranteeing a framework of decent working conditions in all services procured by the local authority, engaging directly in any kind of labour disputes.

Proposal IX, Dignification and democratisation of care work

- Promoting policies involving shared responsibility for work;

- Pursuing public policies encouraging the personal choice to work in areas linked to dependent care;
- Dignifying and giving value to care work in the private sector through social clauses linked to socially responsible public procurement;
- Demarketising the field of care within a defence of the common sphere;
- Proposing comprehensive strategies taking a broad view of care-giving.

Proposal XI, The local sphere as a political actor in alternative organisations of life

- Opting for direct democracy processes in every possible form, especially in defence of the local sphere and of common and strategic goods;
- Promoting participatory democracy processes in planning, budgeting, etc.;
- Engaging with the development of self-managed initiatives and processes of all kinds, with an approach involving building people power;
- Taking part in supra-municipal networks in defence of the local sphere and of life.

Proposal XII, Towards energy sovereignty as a common good

- Outlawing the establishment of energy megaprojects;
- Using public land for promoting the production and use of renewable energy;
- Recovering local energy generation practices;
- Institutional links with renewable energy cooperatives as opposed to large energy firms;
- Establishing environmentally friendly systems for urban waste treatment, such as door-to-door collection;
- Redefining political priorities from a joined-up perspective in terms of energy sovereignty and transition.

Proposal XIII, Care at the core of the community

- Promoting and supporting self-managed local projects focussing on the dignification and democratisation of care, in a broad sense.

Proposal XIV, *Economic production based on work for the common good*

- Using public procurement to encourage alternative economic projects based on work, the common good, democracy and sustainability;
- Pursuing joined-up public policies in support of the alternative economy (making premises available, promoting fairs, social markets, short supply chains, advisory services, local traders, etc.).

Proposal XV, *Lower and responsible consumption*

- Restricting the presence of large retail stores and other mass consumer outlets;
- Encouraging local trade.

Proposal XVI, *Towards ethical banking*

- Active participation in ethical and alternative financing circuits.

Proposal XVII, *Democratisation of media: diverse and not corporatised*

- Backing social/community-based media projects with public policy.

Proposal XVIII, *Exposing and advocating against corporate power*

- Taking part in exposing and sanctioning any harmful impacts of corporations with their parent in the region.

Proposal XIX, *Popular knowledge for decorporatised living*

- Supporting social projects for critical research and advocacy on corporate power.

Proposal XX, *Towards localised agendas and strategies against corporate power*

- Planning a comprehensive, transitional strategy for the progressive dismantling of corporate power.

c. Recommendations for social movements

Social movements (in a wide sense including community-based and trade-union movements, etc.) lead the struggle against transnational corporations and also spearhead emancipatory agendas for a systemic transition. Thus they are strategic players in driving processes based on the common good, people power, work and sustainability. They have a notable role in the front line of resistance against multinationals and in advocacy for legislation to curb corporate power, and above all in their ability to prefigure and introduce alternatives along emancipatory lines.

As in the case of local institutions, we believe social movements should address all the aspects of our framework agenda, though below we specify only recommendations linked to their direct spheres of action.

Proposal I, *Grassroots mobilisation against mega-development projects*

- Deploying comprehensive strategies for combating megaprojects including sustained grassroots mobilisation, direct democracy processes, local-global linkage, a diverse and positive agenda, a legal dimension and resilience methods.

Proposal II, *Halting the advance of corporate global governance*

- Turning social organisation and mobilisation against trade deals (TISA, TTIP, TLCAN, TPP, CETA, etc.) into a priority in the political agenda.

Proposal III, *Defence of the common sphere and demarketisation of common and/or strategic goods*

- Promoting referendums and popular legislative initiatives on the ownership and management of common and strategic goods;
- Promoting communal management projects for common goods;
- Engaging with the remunicipalising of common goods and strategic sectors with people power systems linking the public and community spheres.

Proposal IV, *Comprehensive land reform against corporate land grabs*

- Peacefully occupying land appropriated in land grabs;
- Rolling out food sovereignty initiatives on reclaimed land;
- Drawing up land reform proposals linked to food sovereignty.

Proposal VI, *Non-payment of illegal, illegitimate, odious and unsustainable debt*

- Generating social structures for citizens' debt audits, especially in the local sphere;
- Taking active part in citizens' audit processes launched by public institutions.

Proposal VIII, *A local-global framework for decent labour relations*

- Supporting and engaging with combative trade unionism, built from bottom up and linked to other social movements;
- Undertaking collective bargaining by corporate group, with an internationalist approach.

Proposal IX, *Dignification and democratisation of care work*

- Recognising and advocating for a concept of work going beyond employment to include any task necessary to reproducing life.

Proposal XI, *The local sphere as a political actor in alternative organisations of life*

- Promoting participatory democracy agendas and processes in social and community planning with an inclusive approach;
- Developing self-managed initiatives and processes of all kinds, with an approach involving building people power;

Proposal XII, *Towards energy sovereignty as a common good*

- Engaging with local initiatives for renewable energy generation;
- Engaging with renewable energy cooperatives as opposed to large energy firms;
- Drawing up political agendas with a joined-up perspective in terms of energy sovereignty and transition.

Proposal XIII, *Care at the core of the community*

- Supporting and generating self-managed local projects focussing on the dignification and democratisation of care, in a broad sense.

Proposal XIV, *Economic production based on work for the common good*

- Developing alternative-economy systems progressing in so far as possible towards comprehensive and consolidated arenas and structures;
- Encouraging the networking of alternative-economy initiatives and processes.

Proposal XV, *Lower and responsible consumption*

- Promoting consumption with a logic of systemic transition and support for forms of alternative economy.

Proposal XVI, *Towards ethical banking*

- Active participation in ethical and alternative financing circuits.

Proposal XVII, *Democratisation of media: diverse and not corporatised*

- Launching social/community-based alternative media projects and developing them in a joined-up way.

Proposal XVIII, *Exposing and advocating against corporate power*

- Leading initiatives for research, advocacy and awareness on corporate power (campaigns, boycotts, peoples' tribunals, etc.).

Proposal XIX, *Popular knowledge for decorporatised living*

- Backing social projects for critical research and advocacy on corporate power.

Proposal XX, *Towards localised agendas and strategies against corporate power*

- Planning a comprehensive, transitional strategy for the progressive dismantling of corporate power.

d. Recommendations for citizens at large

Social majorities form the basis of the multiple, diverse and plural subject that is today's working class. It is they that are ultimately sovereign and in a position to change hegemonic mindsets and move on to new ways of organising life. So the struggle between capital and life, i.e. that between the hegemonic agenda and alternative agendas, depends on the resolve of active and critical citizens.

Accordingly, and aside from the need for advocacy of the proposals in our framework agenda against corporate power vis-à-vis public bodies, we recommend the following to citizens at large:

Proposal I, *Grassroots mobilisation against mega-development projects*

- Engaging actively and mobilising against megaprojects.

Proposal II, *Halting the advance of corporate global governance*

- Mobilising and linking up campaigns against trade deals (TISA, TTIP, TLCAN, TPP, CETA, etc.) as a priority of the political agenda.

Proposal III, *Defence of the common sphere and demarketisation of common and/or strategic goods*

- Defending the common status of common and strategic goods, with mobilisations to this end.

Proposal VIII, *A local-global framework for decent labour relations*

- Taking active part in trade unions with a combative agenda vis-à-vis the status quo, in alliance with other social movements.

Proposal XI, *The local sphere as a political actor in alternative organisations of life*

- Taking part in participatory democracy processes and social and community planning with an inclusive approach;
- Developing self-managed initiatives and processes of all kinds, with an approach involving building people power;
- Getting involved in emancipatory social movements.

Proposal XII, *Towards energy sovereignty as a common good*

- Engaging with local initiatives for renewable energy generation;

- Engaging with renewable energy cooperatives as opposed to large energy firms;
- Consuming less energy and materials.

Proposal XIII, *Care at the core of the community*

- Actively pursuing the democratisation of work in the home;
- Dignifying and giving value to work in a broad and inclusive sense.

Proposal XIV, *Economic production based on work for the common good*

- Engaging with various forms of alternative economy, if possible transcending the experimental realm so as to build a more comprehensive system.

Proposal XV, *Lower and responsible consumption*

- Avoiding consuming in large retail stores and preferring local, self-managed and social outlets;
- Avoiding consuming the products and services of large corporations and preferring those of small and medium firms, especially in the solidarity economy and in the field of food sovereignty.

Proposal XVI, *Towards ethical banking*

- Eschewing the mercantile financial system and preferring public banking and social projects for ethical banking.

Proposal XVII, *Democratisation of media: diverse and not corporatised*

- Seeking information from social/community-based projects and taking part in them.

Proposal XVIII, *Exposing and advocating against corporate power*

- Taking part in initiatives for research, advocacy and awareness on corporate power (campaigns, boycotts, peoples' tribunals, etc.).

Proposal XIX, *Popular knowledge for decorporatised living*

- Taking part in social initiatives for critical research and advocacy on corporate power and popular education.

These in short are our recommendations for national governments, local governments, social movements and citizens at large for dismantling corporate power and countering it with new forms of organising life challenging the centrality of capital and markets.

This has in any event been an outline, a set of recommendations which should first be anchored in each particular circumstance and then be continually redefined and refreshed. One of the challenges of this initiative is precisely that of laying groundwork for guidelines, strategies and systematised, localised agendas addressing the task of disputing the ground with transnational corporations.

Finally we highlight the importance of shared responsibility across the various actors in response to our collective appeal. We trust, though the struggle is complex and uncertain, that we will be able to link up processes and actors allowing us to move on towards more liveable and sustainable lives, leaving behind the long trail of exclusion, violence and instability generated by corporate power and the system that supports it. We must, we can.

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