



Urban Public Economics Review

ISSN: 1697-6223

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Universidade de Santiago de Compostela
España

Pozzi, Chiara; Martinotti, Guido
From Seattle to Salonicco (and beyond). political tourism in the second generation metropolis
Urban Public Economics Review, núm. 1, 2004, pp. 37-61
Universidade de Santiago de Compostela
Santiago de Compostela, España

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From Seattle to Salonicco (and beyond). Political Tourism in the Second Generation Metropolis

Chiara Pozzi and Guido Martinotti***

During the last few years international summits and countersummits acquired a growing visibility hand in hand with the staggering increase in number of participants and attention by civil society. The media attention focussed on cities and second generation metropolises hosting these events, and brought them in the eyes of a world audience. Today this kind of marches and demonstrations has become an accepted feature in the activities constituting an important resource in a competition between cities to attract economic activities and populations on the global market.

Militant tourism is a form of temporary use of urban space and services, where the global and local dimensions of social, political, cultural and mediatic life combine in diverse and intriguing ways. The paper focuses on this new phenomenon in four cities –Porto Alegre, Genoa, Davos and Florence– venues of important summits, countersummits or Social Forums. As more events are coming the research will try to monitor them.

Durante los últimos años, las cumbres y “contracumbres” internacionales han adquirido una creciente notoriedad, mano a mano con el asombroso crecimiento en el número de participantes y la atención que la sociedad le presta. Los medios de comunicación han puesto el acento en las ciudades y metrópolis de segunda generación que albergan estos eventos, y las han difundido a nivel mundial. Hoy en día, este tipo de manifestaciones se han convertido en hechos aceptados, constituyendo una importante fuente de competencia entre ciudades para atraer actividad económica y población en el mercado global. El turismo “militante” es una forma de utilización temporal del espacio y los servicios urbanos, donde las dimensiones global y local de la vida

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social, política, cultural y mediática se combinan de modos diferentes. Este trabajo centra su atención en la reproducción de este nuevo fenómeno en cuatro ciudades –Porto Alegre, Génova, Davos y Florencia- sedes de importantes cumbres, “contracumbres” y/o foros sociales.

Key words: urban, sociology, summit, countersummit, Porto Alegre, Genoa, Florence, Davos, forum, WEF, WSF, World, Social Forum, G8, metropolis, tourism, militant tourism, global, globalization

Classification JEL: R11 - R23

INTRODUCTION

This article deals with a little known aspect of the tourist phenomenon we call “political tourism” or, as some people prefer, “activist or militant tourism”. Political tourism and alternative tourism share some features. Indeed, both are deeply rooted in social movements and in civil society and embody specific forms of political involvement. With political tourism, we specifically refer to the temporary use of cities by large number of people on the occasion of major political events and civil society demonstrations. This distinguishes political tourism from the more general tourist phenomena. In both cases, however the given city is being used by large masses of NRP, Non Resident Populations.

This is not a new phenomenon. In the past few years, it became increasingly important with respect to the anti-globalization movement. Along with the growing international summits, the early 1990s witnessed the development and growth of parallel summits and the international civil society network that is against official summits. Today’s phenomenon distinguishes from the past demonstrations of social moments by the internationalization of the anti-globalization movement, the building of an “informal and flexible networking” (Andreatta, della Porta, Mosca, Reiter, 2002) among the different local towns to arrange meetings, and the media focus and involvement in providing event-related information.

We can ask ourselves whether it is correct to define these events as “tourism”. The question is open. Anyway, some relevant aspects must be discussed.

1. Hosting these kinds of demonstration has become ordinary and important in the range of tourist products of “city marketing” like any other event that attracts a large number of people. Just think about

show visitors or cultural and international sports events, businessmen and fairs, Jubilee, etc.

2. The event category that can be defined as “political tourism”, namely the flow of demonstrations of the no-global movement, is strongly motivated by its institutional counterpart and in particular by a number of significant meetings related to international G7 and G8 summits.

3. Due to a dialectical and symbiotic relation to the international counterparts, local governments recently showed interest in hosting the most popular “political tourism” events, being aware of the obvious risks for the host town (as we could experience in some important cases). This attention and expediency are part of a special and widespread propensity of local elite to “city marketing”.

4. Another interesting aspect of this symbiosis is the global nature of the no-global movement. Some conservative commentators used this subject to criticize the no-global movement, but this criticism was as poor and unprofitable as the one in the past according to which only the poor could be Marxists. How can the no-global movement act if not on a global scale? Richard Falk (1999) and Pianta (2001) use the expression “globalization from below” to indicate the pathway of the civil society towards contrast to economic globalization by claiming a globalization of rights and responsibilities. Anti-global activists as a whole do not necessarily protest against building of a global society –even though some of them do– but are rather against the way a global society has been built.

5. The decentralized and self-organized nature of the movement attending these events puts anti-global activists in between classes and parties and causes troubles to law and order maintenance. However, this may occur: Porto Alegre and Florence are significant examples.

Summits and parallel summits have been publicized by media and are increasingly holding media attention. Media coverage of summits as political and civil society events has in turn highlighted global issues as well. With host towns in the spotlight, demonstrations have been made spectacular and depicted by media with images and pictures. Yet, they could also formulate and propose their own messages to a global “audience” becoming world events. In addition to institutional information, an informal communication network began formulating and spreading messages and pictures for specific and fragmented groups located across distant places. New technologies have contributed to the creation of competing information networks characterized by more decentralized

and flexible decision-making information centers. Just think that Internet sites and Web pages can be created by networked individuals and groups without large investments. This is a kind of space-time distanciation, an aspect typical of the globalization process, in which –as Giddens suggests (1990, p. 64)– “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities [...] in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”.

The movement involved in these events is highly organized in an online international network, in which information and relations connect and go beyond the boundaries of the individual national states. Networks represent the big success of the movement of the movements as well as the difficulty in relating to the most traditional left parties. Data about demonstrators against G8 summit in Genoa shows how participants are deeply rooted in a network of associations, how frequent multiple memberships are, but also how little trust is placed in institutions and how problematic the relation to political parties is (Andreatta, della Porta, Mosca, Reiter, 2002).

As locations in which international summits and countersummits are held, cities and local authorities play a pivotal role in defining global policies and, in some cases, become an example of the ability to provide an institutional form to good management practices for local policies (just think of Porto Alegre and the worldwide known participative budget). All towns try, more or less in vain, to promote parallel summits of the civil society as significant events within their own local development and promotion strategy. This gives rise to a new relation among metropolises. Yet, an actual network of interacting cities on the basis of a shared project –like the existing economic networks of worldwide cities Sassen refers to (Sassen, 1994)– is still a long way off (Borja and Castells, 1997). A critical element is represented by the ever-changing demonstration locations and thus a lack in continuity in terms of space references and local players.

Of great importance is finally another relational network made up of the various individuals involved in the event, namely the parallel summit organizers, the no-global movement, the various institutional levels, the local civil society. An analysis on relations between parallel summits and official summits carried out by Pianta highlights a variety of cases. “Less than 30% of parallel summits set up an active dialogue with the official event (typical of lobbying strategies); another 30% shows strong conflict, and over half cases focus on criticism of policies of global

powers (shown in some of previous strategies too)” (Pianta, 2001). A positive interaction between subjects involved in the event is based on an open and active dialogue –significant for the success of the countersummit– as an event that is separate from the official summit, but also as a resource for the city hosting the parallel summit.

To better understand the phenomenon of “political tourism”, it is important to consider the global context in which cities are placed. Let’s consider how competition between cities for work and capital and to attract economic activities increases in such an age of economic globalization and decline of national states, whereas inner cities must increasingly rely on its own resources and capabilities. A development and reinforcement strategy for local resources in more and more required: in addition to manifest risks, new and important resources are visible as well.

Therefore, cities must cope with new problems and find new opportunities by coordinating and relating different subjects, namely public institutions, representative organizations for economic, social and cultural matters, civil society. A mobilization of the local society and a stronger involvement of the town in common objectives are essential for the success of these experiments. In this regard, parallel summits are perceived as new opportunities for local authorities. Combining international mobilization with local participation and mobilization becomes a new challenge to involve towns in global issues in order to gain acknowledgement and advantage on a global scale.

In most cases, local authorities and some private individuals appropriate large sums of capital for maintaining public works, building or enlarging new facilities with a consequent tourism revival for cities and a partially improved quality of life for inhabitants. Becoming a destination of the new movement meetings is for inner cities part of a local development strategy.

If some cases of tourism related to summits and countersummits are analyzed and “political tourism” is connected with the tourism development policies of cities, the importance of this strategy become clearer.

1. COUNTERSUMMITS

In the past few decades, attention to global and local issues in the definition of international political strategies has increased. In parallel, new special spaces have been dedicated to discussion and coordination of globalization projects between governments and intergovernmental

organizations as regards political, economic, social and environmental issues at global level.

The increase in summits, such as G7/G8, and in their influence largely witness the growing power of international organizations and new informal global strategies.

Table 1. History of G7/G8¹

26-27 July 2002	Kananaskis, Canada
20-22 July 2001	Genoa, Italy
21-23 July 2000	Okinawa, Japan
18-20 July 1999	Cologne, Germany
15-17 May 1998	Birmingham, Great Britain
20-22 June 1997	Denver, USA
27-29 June 1996	Lyons, France
19-20 April 1996	Moscow, Russia
15-17 June 1995	Halifax, Canada
8-10 July 1994	Naples, Italy
7-9 July 1993	Tokyo (III), Japan
6-8 July 1992	Munich, Germany
15-17 July 1991	London (III), Great Britain
9-11 July 1990	Houston, Texas, USA summits
14-16 July 1989	Paris, France
19-21 June 1988	Toronto, Canada
8-10 June 1987	Venice (II), Italy
4-6 May 1986	Tokyo (II), Japan
2-4 May 1985	Bonn (II), Germany
7-9 June 1984	London (II), Great Britain
28-30 May 1983	Williamsburg, Virginia, USA
4-6 June 1982	Versailles, France
20-21 July 1981	Ottawa, Canada (Montebello)
22-23 June 1980	Venice (I), Italy
8-29 June 1979	Tokyo (I), Japan
16-17 July 1978	Bonn (I), Germany
7-8 May 1977	London (I), Great Britain
27-28 June 1976	San Juan, Puortorico, USA
15-17 November 1975	Rambouillet, France

¹ From the official G8 site

At the beginning, countersummits reacted against the spreading official summits and aimed at bringing more visibility to critical proposals of the civil society as well as challenging the legitimacy of government summits. Parallel summits involve the global civil society and in particular social movements, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, politicians, etc. Pianta² has identified some relevant elements that characterize countersummits:

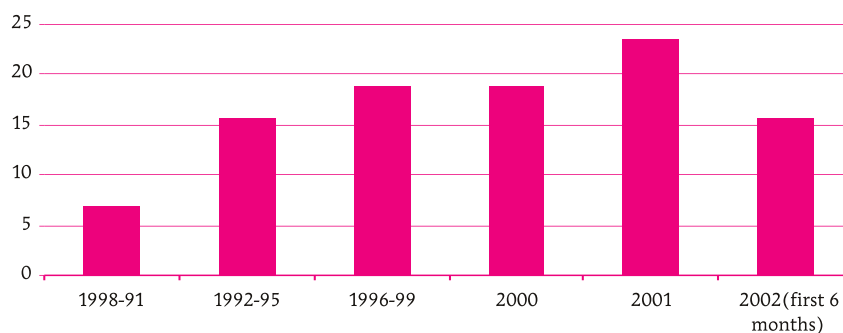
- i. They are organized by national or international civil society groups with international participation independently of the activities of governments and corporations;
- ii. They take place with or in relation to official summits of governments and international institutions (with some important exceptions);
- iii. They address the same issues as official summits, with a critical perspective on government and business policies;
- iv. They use the means of public information and analysis, political mobilization and protest, and alternative policy proposals;
- v. They have or have not formal contacts with the official summit;

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The analysis in the following pages refers to the 2001/2002 annual report on global civil society, from which we take some figures that can be useful for understanding the phenomenon of political tourism.

First of all, figures show a rapid and dramatic increase in countersummits. This data represent most significant indicator of the growing

Chart 1: growth of parallel summits

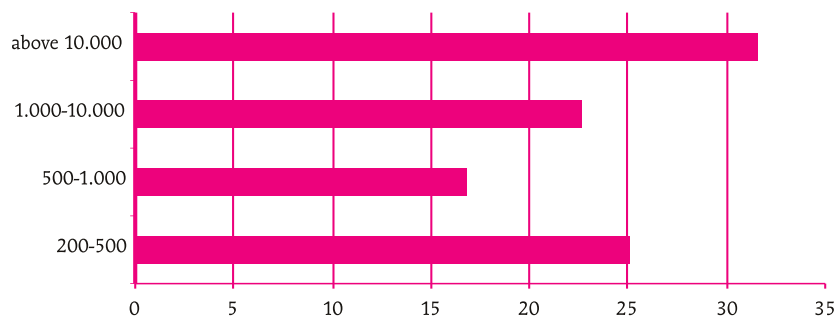


Pianta (2002), 89 cases of parallel summit selected covering the period 1998 - June 2002

² Mario Pianta, Parallel summit of global civil society

importance of these meetings at the global level. The period between 1996 and 1999 witnessed a dramatic increase in parallel summits, which received an additional acceleration increased after the Seattle protest against WTO in 1999. In 2000, the number of countersummits was comparable to that of the three years. The phenomenon further spread in the following two years. Compared with previous years, parallel summits have an increasingly large number of members. This data is also confirmed by the trend of the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre. Chart 2 highlights the attendance at demonstrations. More than 80,000 people were involved in most countersummits analyzed, one third of the global civil society had more than 10,000 participants, one fifth of cases involved between 1,000 and 10,000 people, and one quarter of the events attracted no more than 500 visitors. (Pianta, 2002)

Chart 2: number of participants

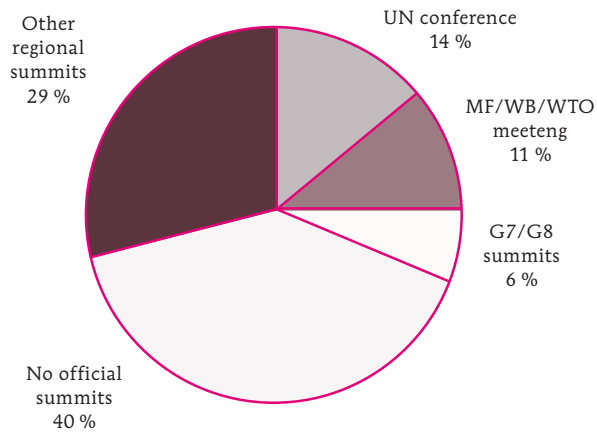


* Pianta (2002), focus on the 35 main events of 2001 and first half 2002

The focus now shifts to the different types of parallel summits. Since 2001, 40 per cent of parallel summits were organized independently of official summits, while this was only about 10% in the past 13 years. This data shows how parallel summits began not to be associated with international meetings and became more and more places for dialogue, debate and planning rather than occasions for direct contrast and confrontation.

Finally, the focus is on the different locations of parallel summits in the world. Chart 4 highlights the key role played by Europe and, in particular, by the Western world, where 47% of global events take place, in parallel with a strong presence of Latin America. Yet, if the data is read

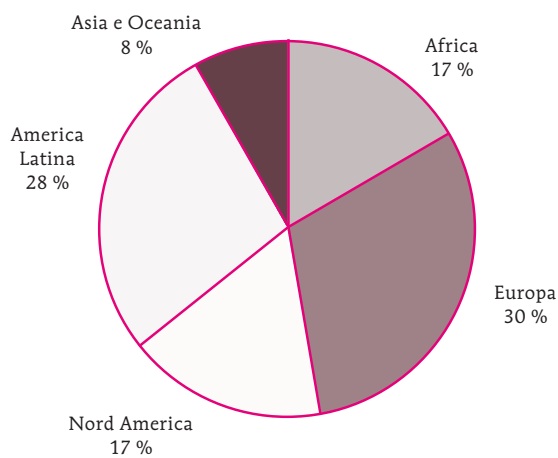
Chart 3: types of parallel summits



* Pianta (2002)

over time³, a shift to the South can be noticed, whereas Europe and America records an opposite trend (in 1988, they hosted 53% and 24% of the events respectively).

Chart 4: location of parallel summits - 2001



* Pianta (2002)

³ Considerations refer to 1988 and June 2001

Table 2: the main recent parallel summits

Place date	Purpose	Participants	Confrontations
Seattle	Stop	60.000	Police responds brutally
30 Nov 1999	MillenniumRound	persons,	450 detained in the
	opposition to the	1400	evening coprifuoco.
	WTO meeting	ONGs.	Side violence agaist
		90 countries	shop- windows, offices
			and multinational hdqs
			(Marina Forti, <i>Il</i>
			<i>manifesto</i> , 3.12.1999)
Davos	Counter summit	150 orgs,	A head-wounded policeman,
16-17 Jan 2000	of the annual	39 countries	a shattered shop window,
	WEF		two damaged limousines,
			an advertising banner on
			fire, graffiti on walls and a
			very little environment-
			friendly carpet of plastic
			bottles. Two demonstrators
			arrested by Swiss police
			(La Repubblica)
Nizza	EuropeanCouncil.	50.000	Tear gas arrests beatings
6-9 Dec 2000	Trigger: the chart	persons	wounded.The French govt
	of fundamental		uplifts the Schengen treay
	Rights		on free circulation to
			prevent italian demonstra-
			tots to enter the country.
			Nontheless demonstrations
			take place and end in
			clashes between demons-
			tratoatrs and the Police
Porto Alegre	World Social	20.000 people	No clash
25-30 Jan 2001	Forum (I),		
	alternative to		
	WEF in Davos		
Goteborg	Primo vertice am-		Police fires on the crowd
14-16 June 2001	biente e commercio		three wounded 1 seriously,
	fra UE e America		600 fermati

Genova 16-22 July 2001	Against G8, demonstration and debates but no parallel forum	250.000 people	Clashes. Very serious episodes of violence on the part of the police. Vandalism esp from "Black Blocs". Windows broken, shops, banks buses, cars assaulted. Hundreds of wounded and detainees 1 dead youth, Carlo Giuliani
Durban 28 Aug- 1 Sep 2001	ONG Forum World Confe- rence Against Racism	7.000 people representing more than 1.300 ONG	
New York 31 Jan- 4 Feb 2002	World Economic Forum	3.000-5.000 (CNN Feb 2 2002)	No clash
Porto Alegre 31 Jan- 5 Feb 2002	World Social Forum (II)		No clash
Johannesburg 26 Aug- 4 Sep 2002	World summit on Environmental problems UN	68.000 people	
Florence 7-9 Nov 2002	European Social Forum FSE	In excess of 500.000 participants Against the war and globalisation	Serious alarm in the prece- ding days. Many shoppers fled. Serious negotiations between local agencies, police and the movement. No clash, police almost invisible. One window broken repaid by organisers who arranged for cleanup after the march
Davos 23-28 Jan 2003	Counter summit of the annual WEF		
Porto Alegre 23-28 Jan 2003	Forum Social Mundial (III)	100.000 politicians 25.000 young people	No clash

2. POLITICAL TOURISM AND CITIES: WHAT PECULIARITY?

To identify some features of “political tourism”, it is interesting to relate it to the different tourism phenomena, in which cities are temporarily used, such as conference tourism, sports tourism or cultural tourism.

The first question is how inhabitants consider a temporary, but massive presence of tourists in their cities.

In his analysis of the resources invested in town tourism development, Eisenger (2000) argues that the huge investments required to build the tourism infrastructure in relation to events that attract a large number of “city users” strain the link between local government and civil society, because disregard local priorities and real needs of city dwellers. The Investments made to build, enlarge and restore convention and sport centers, and to provide facilities for concerts and festivals, are impressive. By way of example, Eisenger refers to the United States, where more than \$2 billion have been spent annually by the early 1990s on sport facilities and convention centers alone.

In this perspective, political tourism gives rise to new considerations. Let’s consider all city spaces used and occupied by “city users”. As far as conference tourism and sport tourism are concerned, users mainly use spaces and facilities not used by city dwellers every day. On the contrary, countersummit and forum participants mainly use commonly used public areas, such as streets, places, parks, schools or universities. Considering the fact that the type of events analyzed is increasingly growing in autonomy from official summits –many demonstrations are even organized in different locations and at different times– it can be assumed that investments from private individuals and local authorities are also used to improve public facilities and infrastructures rather than private spaces used by few people. In such a context, the role played by old city centers, as showcase of cities and primary local resource for cultural tourism and during international summits, decreases in importance, whereas more attention is paid to city spaces. Convention and sport centers are a small part of cities used by countersummit participants and are part of investments required to host them.

In this perspective, activist tourism gets off the circuit of mass tourism, of the “tourist enclaves” mentioned by Judd (2003), of old city centers and city tourist spaces. Forum and countersummit participants discover suburbs, minor and self-organized associations, come into contact

with local social development projects. For example, during the World Social Forum some Sin Terra camps could be visited, it was possible to come into contact with cooperatives, associations, local authorities and observe their work more closely.

Spaces, pathways and times of countersummit participants cross the ones of traditional tourism as well as the ones of host city dwellers.

Let's examine people attending these demonstrations more closely. Data available –we refer in particular to the World Social Forum– shows socially mixed participants: VIPs –politicians or representatives of international organizations– and the civil society, including a large number of young people. Internal differentiation of the no-global movement is shown by the plurality of life styles and services and goods used in host cities. Once again, Porto Alegre showed differences ranging from the selection of an accommodation –20,000 people stayed in hotels, 30,000 in camping, 40,000 in alternative facilities such as inhabitants' houses and schools⁴– to the means of transport used to participate in the event and to move around the city (plane, train, bus, private car, taxi cab, hitchhiking, bike), food, and daily expenses. The composite nature of countersummit participants is declared by the movement in the “World Social Forum Charter of Principles” approved during the first edition of the WSF and confirmed by the research on the anti-G8 summit in Genoa in terms of social heterogeneity and generation differences (Andreatta, della Porta, Mosca, Reiter, 2002, p. 74). As a result, the economic impact of the event on cities affects a wider range of the local population and spreads across the territory.

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Compared with political and anti-cultural demonstrations, countersummit organization and participation make use of the services provided by tourist agencies, even though only to a little extent in comparison with other mass tourism phenomena. This is due to the fact that “political tourists” are critical consumers who pay attention to using services and are interested in a local sustainable development.

The network woven by the no-global movement indirectly empowers and strengthens a network of local resources that not only is involved in the event, but plays also a leading role in organizing the parallel summit and hosting participants. The relation between international and local movement mediates the interaction between event and territory

⁴ Interview to C A. Krause, responsible for the tourist agency that managed hosting activities for participants of the three editions of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre.

and softens the impact of a temporary, but massive presence of tourists on the whole city.

Direct and indirect involvement in the event also increases the awareness of social justice contributing both to a new positive relation between residents and demonstrators and to reconciliation between host city and event-related objectives. (Lanfford and Howard, 1994). As a result, the risk of violence and vandalism can be identified and limited more easily.

Another element that helps an event become an ordinary life event is the long duration of countersummits and Forums. Indeed, a lengthy stay of participants in the event location helps approaching and discovering the host city.

A final aspect to be considered is the importance of tourism for government and local politics. Hosting such a sports event as the Olympic Games in the United States played a key political role in the election campaign. (Andranovich, Burbank, Heying, 2001; De Lange, 1998). It is unquestionable that hosting a parallel summit currently plays a key political role, especially for the political implications of the event. In local politics, such a decision may give rise to contrasts from parties and pressure groups as it happened for the European Social Forum held in Florence in 2001. Once again, the power of the media plays a pivotal role.

The four cases examined allow some considerations to be highlighted. In cases such as Davos and Genoa, countersummits frontally protested against the official summits also held in the city, whereas in Porto Alegre and Florence, countersummits (or Forums) took place autonomously.

3. THE CASE OF THE WSF IN PORTO ALEGRE

“The city of Porto Alegre hosts events such as conventions, forums and fairs 300 days a year thanks to past years’ investments also for WSF. Hosting facilities have increased and the organizing machine has improved so much that the European Broadcasting Union argues that no city in the world can host a demonstration of such an extent”⁵.

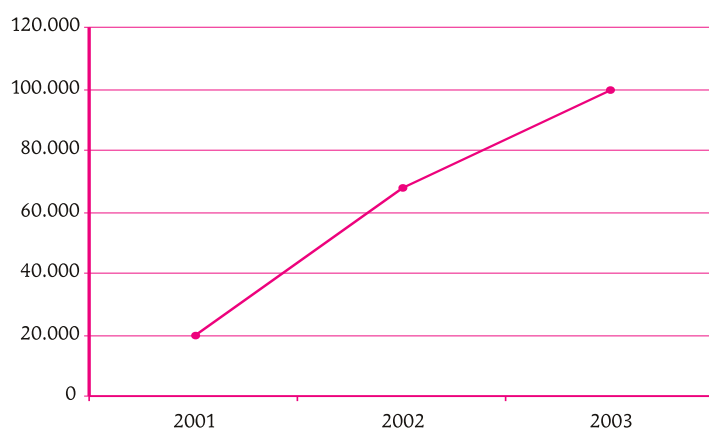
Since January 2001, Porto Alegre has hosted the first three editions of the World Social Forum. The event was mainly organized by Brazilian organizations including the municipality of Porto Alegre, trade unions,

⁵ Interview to Carlos Alberto Krause, responsible for the tourist agency that manage hosting activities for participants of the World Social Forum since 2001.

radical parties, the Sem Terra movement, the Brazilian Organizing Committee for Non Governmental Organizations, basic movements, and the French organization Attac.

During the five-day event, thousands of people attended the demonstration and stayed in the city. The number of people increased fourfold over three years from 20,000 in 2001 to 100,000 in the last edition in 2003.

Chart 5: World Social Forum – growth of participants



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Source: official Web site of the World Social Forum

The key role played by media has characterized the event since its beginning. Indeed, the movement that contributed to the Forum organization has developed through the media and has continued to officially discuss its positions on the important magazine *Le monde diplomatique*. The last edition of the World Social Forum witnessed about 3,000 press corps from 48 countries, including various media plus about 780 freelance journalists and several information networks of the organizations attending the meeting (community radio stations, street televisions, independent fanzines and auto-produced Internet sites)⁶. Media communication outside and inside the event was powered by Procempa – a com-

⁶ Among the media officially attending the Forum there were 467 newspapers, 193 magazines, 188 radio stations, 140 digital information channels, 116 TV channels, from the official site of the World Social Forum.

pany providing IT services to the municipality of Porto Alegre – in order to ensure one hundred thousands people access to the Internet and event-related online information. As a result, the communication among participants, Forum organization and the external world could be improved. More than 650 Internet broadband workstations were available for all demonstrators in different areas of the city. This data shows how important production and transmission of images and messages has been.

“In Porto Alegre, international and internal tourism has increased”, states C. A. Krause, who is responsible for the tourist agency that managed hosting activities for the Forum participants. Brazilians, who prefer spending holidays at the seaside or in other country locations, have always considered the city as a cold place. Thanks to the visibility gained by Porto Alegre in relation to the Forum and to some recent TV programs shot across the city, the capital of Rio Grande do Sur is becoming more and more a destination for cultural, gastronomic and conference tourism⁷.

The event of Porto Alegre allows us to highlight the social heterogeneity of political tourism as well as the “fragmented” consumption choices and use of services in the city. As far as housing is concerned, in 2003 about 20,000 people stayed in hotels, 30,000 were hosted in the youth camping specially organized by the municipality of Porto Alegre, and an estimated 40,000 people were hosted in alternative facilities, such as schools or houses of Porto Alegre inhabitants.

Also thanks to the variety of people attending the Forum, the event was positively welcomed by the city, became part of the city rhythms and public spaces, and provided a personal approach to the territory⁸.

If the 2002 edition is compared with the 2003 edition, the number of spaces for the various activities has increased in order to boost and decentralized the initiatives offered and decrease the impact of a massive presence of people on the city. Two special bus lines were introduced to help movements and cover all five Forum areas involved. To improve service and help communication with participants, the municipality of Porto Alegre organized an English course for 400 taxi-drivers during 2002.

⁷ Interview to Carlos Alberto Krause, responsible for the tourist agency that manage hosting activities for participants of the World Social Forum since 2001.

⁸ Interview to Carlos Alberto Krause, responsible for the tourist agency that manage hosting activities for participants of the World Social Forum since 2001.

Before shifting the focus on economic information about the Forum and on the resources produced by the event, it is necessary to remember the participative experience that characterizes the city of Porto Alegre. The introduction of the participative budget in 1989 gave substance to the objective of the local government to involve population in defining municipal policies and, in particular, in deciding priorities of allocation of a major part of public resources. Citizens were directly involved and were requested to express their own opinion about municipal expenses and investments through a complex, but effective decision-making process at territory level. As part of this collective participation, investments for the World Social Forum are considered as investments for the community too, rather than being decided by a few individuals. The activist tourism in the city of Porto Alegre is an example of best practices of public institutions and becomes a key exception of the trend identified by Eisinger (2000), according to which the growth of tourism helps fragmenting urban policies into a constellation of public/private institutions that operate largely independently of a local government and democratic institutions.

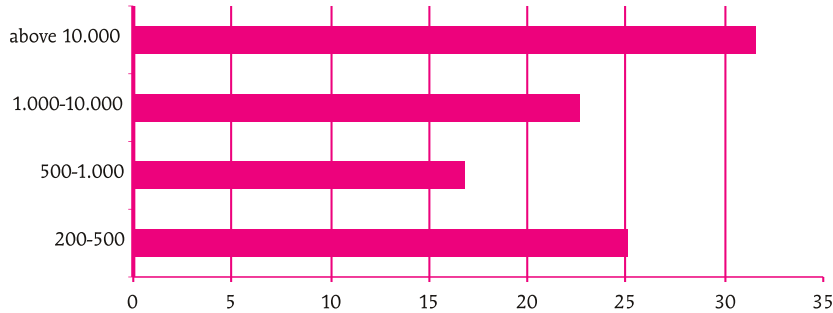
Costs borne by the Forum amounted to about US\$3.5 million in addition to expenses for initiatives directly organized by the Municipality. The estimated money produced by the Forum is between a minimum amount of US\$20 million and a maximum amount of US\$50 million inclusive of expenses for transports, housing and food⁹. During the week of 2003 World Social Forum, the city of Porto Alegre “earned” about US\$15 million.

The economic, social and tourist return is confirmed by data on the monthly hotel occupancy rate for Porto Alegre. Chart 6 shows a net increase in occupancy rates for hotel facilities during the month (January) in which the WSF took place. A more detailed study on the demonstration days in 2003 shows that the World Social Forum recorded a 98.6% increase in hotel occupancy rate with a 101% highest peak on January 23. Sales of hotel and gastronomic facilities were about R\$20 million between January 19 and 29¹⁰. The study also shows that the hotel occupancy rate reached 53.46% in January 2003, which is 32.52% more than January 2002. Hotel trade union reported full occupancy during the demonstration period.

⁹ Estimate was carried out by the WSF organization

¹⁰ Research by Sindicato de Hotéis Restaurantes, Bares e Similares of Porto Alegre (SHRBS).

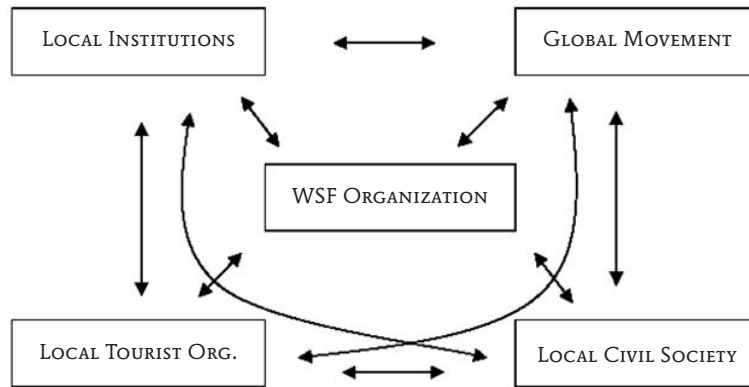
Chart 6: hotel occupancy rate in Porto Alegre



Source: Sindicato de hotéis de Porto Alegre

The following chart outlines interactions among the various subjects directly or indirectly involved in the event organization and implementation. The main subjects involved in the event are the anti-global movement, the local civil society, the Forum organization, local institutions at different levels and tourist organization. The latter includes the city’s tourist and development office, the tourist agency responsible for managing hosting activities in synergy with the municipal office, and all other tourist specialists. We can observe that no one was isolated. We argue that Porto Alegre is an object lesson in the ability of building a dialogue and a successful interaction among different subjects within the same city area. Subjects include very thick relational networks that mutually interact and produce a new temporary subject.

Figure 1: interaction among subjects involved in WSF



Reciprocity and justice are some of the conditions that allow a positive or negative assessment (Searle 1991). As far as activist tourism in Porto Alegre is concerned, it is unquestionable that relations between Porto Alegre inhabitants, on one hand and the Forum organization and the local institutions on the other hand as well as the introduction of the participative budget have played a key role in the positive assessment of the event. In accordance with the social exchange theory, a positive assessment of an event and of the related tourism is given when players have little power within the existing relations.

4. 1 OTHER CASES: THE G8 SUMMIT IN GENOA IN 2001

During the five years between 1999 and 2004, the strategic development plans for Genoa tourist policy aim at implementing a multiple offer targeted to people of different age, origin and social class. These plans are divided into four areas: cultural tourism, conference and fair tourism, family tourism (game and sports) and school tourism. In addition to these areas, another kind of tourism may be identified: the so-called “passing tourism” mainly related to the passengers transport services of the city port.

The G8 summit in Genoa is part of the tourism development and promotion strategy of the city and it's an occasion for advertising a new image, a changing inner city open to international perspectives. A city trying to enter the worldwide network of cities able to attract and offer quality services during the most important world summits. Hosting the international G8 summit meant to catch the world's attention during the four days in which the event took place.

The crowd of people invading Genoa to protest against the official summit has been an unprecedented event in the G7/G8 history. The case of Genoa can be distinguished by the polarization between summit and countersummit (see the crush barriers halving the city and the slogan used by demonstrators “You: G8. Us: six billion”). In those days, radicalization of social conflict spread over the whole city. The Genoa civil society was in a state of tension during the initial preparation of the official summit, during the summit days but also after the demonstration. Security became essential for both the summit and the activities planned by the countersummit organizers. Given its exceptional nature, the anti-G8 summit in Genoa witnessed an escalation of violence, “the percentage of clashes between police and demonstrators were indicative of the most visible events organized by the movement” since the early 2000. (Andreatta, della Porta, Mosca, Reiter, 2002, p. 108).

Genoa was defined as an “armored” city. The neat division into a “yellow zone”, which acted as a buffer zone, and the top security “red zone”, the shutting of the two main rail stations, the airport and all motorways for five days, all this contributed to the growing fear and dread among residents.

The city became inhospitable for both countersummit participants and Genoa inhabitants, who felt very uncomfortable. Most shops were closed and many Genoa people decided to stay outside Genoa during the four days of the countersummit. “Two days before the beginning of the summit, consumption of energy and waste production were down to 40% (Andreatta, della Porta, Mosca, Reiter, 2002, p. 116). The inner city was desert, windows and doors were closed, streets, parks and open spaces were empty. The common feeling of people attending G8 countersummit was that of a city hosting the summit and rejecting the parallel summit (Notarbartolo, 2001).

This feeling was confirmed by the investments made for organization and renovation of public works in relation to the two events: 200 billion Lire were paid for G8 compared to 3 billion Lire paid for anti-G8 summit. These expenses are to be added to the costs for damage during the four-day parallel summit that were borne by the city in the following period: 13,580,000,000 Lire for private properties and 5 billion Lire for public properties. The Municipality of Genoa stated that these investments were invaluable assets for the tourist revival of the city and for the quality of the citizens’ life.

Summit and countersummit remained separate from each other with no possibility of interaction between participants and organizers. Local, national and international institutions were mainly in charge of organization and security of summit participants rather than mediating between the two parallel events. The lack in dialogue among the host city (local institutions, inhabitants, tourist organizations), organizers and participants further disconnected the event from its city context. The countersummit was not perceived as a resource by the city and vice versa. The air full of tension due to the neat division of the city grew thicker and became critical because of the presence of police troops and of constant checks (international borders, railway stations, city streets) and the action of black block groups between police and demonstrators.

Anyway, G8 summit has been considered as an important step towards the development of city perspectives before and after it took place. A brief balance of the town council shows that G8 and anti-G8 summits have

been an important occasion for external visibility. “According to estimates, at least 20,000 articles were published in 2001 on the main national and international newspapers, including tourism and culture magazines, and numberless messages were broadcast on radio and TV. The Internet site about G8 created by the Municipality was visited by an average of 150,000 people every day (300,000 people per day in July alone)”¹¹.

Figure 2: “red zone” and “yellow zone” in Genoa



4.2 THE WEF IN DAVOS

The WEF annual meeting usually takes place at the end of January in Davos since 1971. Like in Genoa, countersummit participants in Davos were seen as a danger rather than a resource for the city. Concern for internal city security grew in relation to the increase in parallel summits and the radicalization of the no-global movement on the one hand, and to the growing criticism over economic globalization issues (since the late 1980s and even more after 2000) and the experience of Seattle and Genoa on the other hand.

Such a concern is confirmed by the analysis of data about funds appropriated by public authorities. The Swiss Confederation locked up

¹¹ Comune di Genova, Piano strategico della città di Genova. Dalla conferenza strategica al 2004, 2010. Libro uno. Bilancio 1999 – 2001 e prospettive, p. 7

3.25 million Swiss francs for security measures for the 2003 summit alone. Additional costs in the national budget for the 2003 World Economic Forum amounted to 13.5 million Swiss francs among Swiss Confederation, Canton Grisons, Municipality of Davos and WEF¹².

The municipality of Davos paid great attention to promotion and organization of globally relevant convention events, such as the World Economic Forum, which added prestige to Davos also thanks to the presence of some important conference centers, namely the Congress & Seminar Center. This center is used about 250 days per year and is the most used convention facility across Switzerland. Conference tourism in Davos accounts for 15% of total hotel stays (167,000 hotel stays per year) mainly in low-season months. Like Genoa and Florence and unlike Porto Alegre, Davos attracts a variety of tourists. In particular, tourism in Davos is related to winter sports. The World Economic Forum registered about 400 media, of which about 75 representatives came from Switzerland.

4.3 THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM IN FLORENCE

Florence is a very special city. Characterized by a strong tourist load as a globally renowned artistic city, Florence is also the center of productive activities that its competitiveness in the manufacturing industry market. This double character puts the city on a unique place on the Italian and European scenario. Tourism in Florence is based on an increasingly growing demand for international visitors, who are attracted by both cultural activities promoted by the city and the monuments and artistic works preserved by the city as well as by the products of its craftsmen.

Florence is a city largely open to international scenarios, even though the strategy chosen by the local authorities –strategic city plan¹³– focuses on an image relaunch from a city of culture to a city of European interest at different levels. So, the question whether the decision to host the 2002 European Social Forum is part of this planned openness to an European dimension different from the current image and artistic role of Florence makes sense.

Indeed, hosting the ESF had a token and political importance for the municipality and for the whole city after media focus and pressure on the no-global movement during the anti-G8 forum in Genoa a year before.

¹² Official site of the Swiss Confederation <http://www.admin.ch/>

¹³ Florence site <http://www.comune.firenze.it/progettarefirenze/mainmat1.html>

The European Social Forum attracted 35,000 representatives of organizations and associations of the civil society from a variety of countries¹⁴, but people attending the demonstration were over 500,000. Like in Porto Alegre, the event participants were hosted in public facilities or in houses of Florence inhabitants.

During November 2002, the European Social Forum – held in November, 7-9, represented 4% of total time used for prime time news at national level. In national TV news, this event was included in news categories such as “Civil and human rights” – one of the subjects discussed during the Forum – as well as “Law and order” and “Dispute and social tensions”¹⁵.

To avoid any social tensions and oppose the message about insecurity for Florence inhabitants and artistic works conveyed by media and some political fractions, a network was established to inform and prepare people for the event. “Florence, the open city” became the slogan of the European Social Forum inside and outside the city. Involvement extended to business activities to promote the Forum as resource for the individual shop activities.

During the weeks before the event, Confesercenti gave an important contribution by cooperating with the Forum movement and organization to persuade its member not to close. Most shops participated in the campaign and only 2% of them were closed¹⁶.

Thanks to the positive dialogue among prefecture, police officers, local institutions and Forum organizers during the months preceding the event, solutions for logistic, organizational and security problems were found.

¹⁴ 2800 Frenchmen, 1400 Englishmen, 1500 Germans, 500 Spaniards from Barcelona, 900 Greeks, 540 Austrians, 50 Danes, 260 Hungarians, 20 Kurds, 70 Russians, 170 Albanians.

¹⁵ Observatory of Pavia media research

¹⁶ Estimate was carried out by Confesercenti.

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INTERVIEW, 18/02/2003: to Carlos Alberto Krause, responsible for the tourist agency that manage hosting activities for participants of the World Social Forum since 2001

INTERNET SITES

OFFICIAL SITE OF WORLD SOCIAL FORUM:

<http://www.portoalegre2003.org/>

OFFICIAL SITE OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM:

<http://www.fse-esf.org/>

OFFICIAL SITE OF MUNICIPALITY OF FLORENCE:

<http://www.comune.firenze.it/progettarefirenze/mainmat1.html>

OFFICIAL SITE OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION:

<http://www.admin.ch>

OFFICIAL SITE OF OBSERVATORY OF PAVIA MEDIA RESEARCH:

<http://www.osservatorio.it/>

OFFICIAL SITE OF SHRBS:

<http://www.shrbs.com.br/>