

Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives
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Lecture – 45
Imaginations of Alternate Globalization – II

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- Global neoliberalism has brought issues of gender to the forefront of transnational social movement organizations in a dramatic way. Until there has been a revolutionary transformation of gender roles, the disadvantages of allocating resources purely on the basis of market logic will fall particularly harshly on women.
- “structural adjustment” and other neoliberal strategies for global governance contain a built-in, systematic gender bias.
- The UNDP talks of a global “care deficit,” pointing out that women spend most of their working hours on unpaid care work and adding that “the market gives almost no rewards for care.”



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Welcome back to the class; we continue with the previous discussion on alternative globalizations. And we were discussing a particular topic of the idea of counter-hegemonic globalization by Peter Evans. So, he was arguing that the kind of globalization we are encountering today, neo-liberal globalization is not natural; not given, it is not inevitable; somewhat, it can be challenged.

And he proposes that three families of moments, starting with the labour movement, women's movement, and then environmental moments, can bring a mighty alliance of peoples and organisations from across the globe. So, we discussed how jobs had been formalised in a globalised world, mainly when it is run based on neoliberal policies.

And also, we were discussing how women are at a very disadvantageous position in neo-liberal policies because it is least sensitive to these questions of gender issues and other questions. So,

even now, a vast majority of women's work is unrecognised, and it is unacknowledged; it is underpaid, or many times, even unpaid. So, he believes it requires change.

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- women's organizations have an advantage over transnational labor movements in that they do not have to transcend a zero-sum logic equivalent to that of the "geography of jobs" which would put the gendered interests of women in one region in conflict with those in another region.
 - Like the labor movement, the women's movement's ideological foundations are rooted in a discourse of "human rights," but transnational feminism, much more than in the labor movement, has wrestled with the contradictions of building politics around the universalistic language of rights.
 - An incredible gamut of geographic, cultural, and class locations, any earlier naive assumptions that there was a single "one size fits all" global feminist agenda have been replaced by appreciation that the goal is much more complex.



So, let us continue with that line of discussion. So, women's organisations have an advantage over transnational labour movements. They do not have to transcend a zero-sum logic equivalence to that of the geography of jobs, which would put the gendered interest of women in one region in conflict with those of another part. One of his exciting critical observations is that, for example, labourers from another area could threaten labourers in one particular region.

We have seen that when labourers are taken when migrants come in as labourers, they often come in conflict with the labourers of their particular region. When the company shifts their entire operation from one locality to another, it becomes an issue between labourers of one area. But whereas in the case of women, the women's movement does not face that, the other women of other countries are not kind of in a threat or challenge or competition to these women.

So, this geography hardly matters regarding feminist movements and environmental movements. Like the women's movements, ideological foundations are rooted in human rights discourse like the labour movement. But transnational feminism, much more than in the labour movement, is a result of the contradictions of building politics around the universalistic language of rights.

We know that feminist politics have always been using this whole idea of rights, that women's rights are universal, women's rights are human rights. So, they would like to present it as a universal right that women have similar rights across the globe. But while it is essential to give it as human rights, feminist theory has already discussed extensively that beyond this assertion, there are very context-specific cultural issues, for example, the whole idea about black feminism.

Then when you bring in colour, when you bring in the race, when you get in religion, when you get in caste, when you bring in a region, when you bring in ethnicity, the women's issues are significantly different from each other. So, at the same time, you can use this universal language of human rights that should not make you oblivious to deeper context-specific issues of differences.

An incredible gamut of geographic, cultural and class locations, any earlier naive assumptions that there was a single one size fits appreciation has replaced all global feminist agendas that the goal is much more complex. From the 1990s onwards, we know that the whole black feminism, the rise of black feminism in the US. And in India as well, we had its resonance in the form of Dalit feminism.

So, the questions and issues faced by an upper-caste woman and a Dalit woman are entirely different. And then, again, the questions of poverty, the questions of economic inequality, a host of other issues when you complicate this scenario with more and more variables, we realise that there is, the realm the field is much more fraught, and cannot be equated with more accessible once.

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- Precarious participation in the “informal economy” – a vast arena in which the traditional organizational tools of the transnational labor movement are least likely to be effective. Women in the informal sector experience the insecurity and lack of “social contract” that appear to be the neoliberal destiny of all but a small minority of the workforce, regardless of gender.
- Aggressive effort to expand the idea of the social contract into the informal sector is mandatory.
- Example of “Self-employed Women’s Association” (SEWA) as an organizational form, starting in India and spreading to South Africa, Turkey, and other countries in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Africa, and eventually creating incipient international networks such as “Homenet” and “Streetnet.”



So, precarious participation in the informal economy is a vast arena in which the traditional organisational tools of the transnational labour movement are least likely to be practical. Women in the informal sector experience the insecurity and lack of social contract that appear to be the neo-liberal destiny of all but a small minority of the workforce, regardless of gender. So, this kind of social contract that a formal workplace setting promises are limited to a few people; it is limited to a few sections of people.

And the vast majority of the population, including men and women, have been pushed into this informal economy where nothing exists between the employer and the employee. I am sure you are familiar with this, putting out a system where women do part-time work from their own house. Then some agent comes in and gives them all the ingredients and raw materials, and after a couple of days, they will come and then take the finished goods and pay them for a particular piece.

So, all these contribute to the kind of economic insecurity and vulnerability of the people. Aggressive efforts to expand the social contract's idea into the informal sector are mandatory. So, that is the whole idea; how do you provide or ensure a legal security net for these women because they are not covered under PF, are not covered under pension, do not have any social security, rules and regulations, their working hours are not regulated.

So, how do we tackle this is a significant question. The examples of self-employed Women's Association, SEWA. So, he gives an example of a fascinating experience started in India, about the SEWA as an organisation formed beginning in India and spreading to South Africa, Turkey and other countries in Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa. And it was eventually creating incipient international networks such as Home net and Street net.

I urge you to look up these fascinating industries; the story of SEWA itself is very, very interesting. So, it is there as an example of something that started in India and then later became transnational, which very effectively intervenes in women's lives and tries to redress their issues to a large extent.

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- Environmental stewardship is almost by definition a collective issue and therefore an issue that should lend itself to collective mobilization.
- However, there is the formidable gap that separates the South's "environmentalism of the poor," in which sustainability means above all else sustaining the ability of resource-dependent local communities to extract livelihoods from their natural surroundings, and the "conservationist" agenda of traditional Northern environmental groups, which favors the preservation of fauna and flora without much regard for how this conservation impacts the livelihoods of surrounding communities.



And the third one that Peter Evans talks about is environmental concerns. So, this environmental stewardship is almost by definition, a collective issue and, therefore, an issue that should lend itself to joint mobilisation. The point that we mentioned earlier is that environmental issues are global issues by default. No individual country, no particular group will resolve it; it requires international collaboration international efforts to bring in some solution or ways of addressing that.

However, there is this formidable gap that separates the South's environmentalism of the poor, in which sustainability means, above all else, sustaining the ability of resource-dependent local communities to extract livelihood from their natural surroundings and the conservationist's plan

of the traditional northern environmental groups, which favours the preservation of fauna and flora without much regard to how this conservation impacts the livelihood of surrounding communities.

Now, the whole question is, in terms of environmental concerns, he is bringing in this kind of conflict between the global north and the global south terms, which are used to roughly indicate the European and the first world countries and the rest of the societies. The global north would invariably include the USA, Canada and the European institutions, and the global south would consist of almost every other country.

So here, their environmental priorities are different. For example, sustainability means sustaining the ability of resource-dependent local communities to extract livelihood from their natural surroundings. That is the case for the poorer countries; in a developing country like India, the forest is a vital resource, we will be forced to use coal because coal is cheap and abundantly available.

Because even though we know that coal is creating quite a lot of pollution, we will not; we do not have other alternative energy sources, so we use coal. For us, the development of the poorer section is essential. So, there is all we are; the developing countries are constantly forced to balance their ecological concerns and livelihood issues for their vulnerable communities.

Whereas for the North, they are at the luxury of not worrying too much about their sustainability or the kind of resources for their vulnerable communities. Instead, they can say that all these are flora and fauna have to be protected; they should not be exploited. So, how can developmental initiatives with very different responses from very affluent countries and less affluent be significant?

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- Some issues – such as global warming and the ozone layer – seem intrinsically global, whereas the politics of others, such as the health consequences of toxic dumps, can be intensely local. The challenges of building a global organization that effectively integrates locally focused activities with global campaigns would seem particularly challenging in the case of the environmental movement.
- As the labor and women's movements are able to leverage the ideological power of abstract concepts like "human rights" and "democracy," environmentalists can claim an impeccable universal agenda of "saving the planet" and invoke "scientific analysis" as validating their positions.



Some issues, such as global warming and the ozone layer, seem intrinsically global, whereas the politics, such as the health consequences of toxic dumps, can be intensely local. We know that the ozone layer and the depletion of the ozone layer are a threat to every country, and rising global temperature is a threat to every other country. At the same time, the dumping of toxic waste material from America to a port town in India or a port town in Bangladesh could be a very local issue.

The challenges of building a global organisation that effectively integrates socially-focused activities with global campaigns would seem particularly challenging in the case of the environmental movement. As the labour and women's movements can leverage the ideological powers of abstract concepts like human rights and democracy, environmentalists can claim an impeccable universal plan of saving the planet and invoke scientific analysis validating their position.

So, these are the global, more enormous universalistic slogans like democracy, human rights, saving the planets and scientific analysis. So, Peter Evans believes that these widespread movements will have the attention to bring in a wide variety of actors and organisations under one umbrella and think about counter-hegemonic globalization.

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The global justice movement



- the first World Social Forum (WSF), held in Porto Alegre in January 2001, 2002 European Social Forum in Florence, the 2004 WSF in Mumbai, and the 2005 WSF in Porto Alegre marked three high points of this period of the global justice movement.
- The global justice movement has expanded geographically, but at the same time the 2006 "Polycentric" WSF held in Bamako (Mali), Caracas (Venezuela), and Karachi and the 2007 WSF in Nairobi were in many respects less successful than previous events. The integration of grassroots activists diminished, while NGOs and activists who supported formal political actors and regimes became more prominent.



Now, let us make sense of this global justice movement. So, maybe starting the First World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre in Brazil, in January 2001, 2002, European Social Forum in Florence, in France, the 2004 World Social Forum in Mumbai, and 2005, World Social Forum in Porto Alegre again in Brazil mark the three high points of this period of the global justice movement.

So, as I mentioned in the previous class, this World Social Forum is exciting. It was an exciting collective. It was a thrilling spectacle of people from across the globe coming and then protesting and then sharing visions of an alternative world those things. The Global Justice Movement has expanded geographically, but at the same time, the 2006 polycentric World Social Forum was held in Bamako in Mali, Caracas, the capital city of Venezuela, and Karachi.

And the 2007 World Social Forum in Nairobi was less successful than the previous events in many respects. The integration of grassroots activists diminished, while NGOs and activists who supported former political activists and regimes became more prominent. So, again, it is exciting to see why that particular moment lost its steam and why it no longer can attract the kind of grassroots level organisations; instead, it has been taken over by large NGOs, which have appeared political backing or support from political parties.

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- Global justice activists saw that the battle against neoliberalism plays out primarily in the realm of ideas and that ideological change is the basis for sustainable social transformation.
- “From the point of view of development, it is not so much money which counts as ideas.” Their success in challenging the dominant ideology is based on testing whether neoliberalism has lived up to its own values of democracy and scientific rationality.
- Global justice economics moves from a discursive emphasis on poverty and suffering to an analysis of economic inequality, focusing on the logic of social conflict and social agency. Poverty is thus not fatal, but a consequence of the dominant economic model – i.e. capitalism – and the unequal distribution of wealth that “impoverishes” poor and working people around the globe. Global justice activists insist that poverty need not be endemic and suggest relatively inexpensive ways to alleviate or eradicate it.



So, global justice activists say that the battle against the new liberalism plays out primarily in ideas. That ideological change is the basis for sustainable social transformation. From the point of view of development, it is not so much money which counts, but as ideas. The success in challenging the dominant ideology is based on testing whether neo-liberalism has lived up to its democracy and scientific rationality values.

So, we know that neo-liberalism promised a free world, a free world of ideas, a free world of democracy, the dissent of diverse opinions, and rationality, scientific rationality. But the whole question, the mute question, is, does neo-liberalism stand up to its values of this democracy and scientific rationality. Global justice economics move from a discursive emphasise on poverty and suffering to an analysis of economic inequality, focusing on the logic of social conflict and social agency.

Poverty is thus not fatal but a consequence of the dominant economic model: capitalism and unequal distribution of wealth that impoverishes the poor and the working of people around the globe. Global justice activist insists that poverty need not be endemic and suggest relatively inexpensive ways to alleviate or eradicate it. We know that we are now producing more than good stuff to feed the world. Foodgrains are being paid more, especially since India is making surplus food. However, we still have a large population reeling under poverty children, and malnutrition is rampant. So, it is not the question of supply, but then there is a host of other

issues, other systemic issues, social and economic and cultural issues, which stand in between these poorest of the poor, from acquiring their nutrition and then food.

So, they change these political discourses so that more innovative, radical ideas are necessary to ensure a more egalitarian world or global justice.

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- Global justice activists attempt to re-insert social and political questions into issues treated by neoliberal economics as solely involved with the maximization of efficiency. They denounce the imposition of neoliberalism by non-accountable experts and barely democratic institutions.
- To build a fairer world, they argue for a notion of active rather than passive citizenship, requiring a public familiar with scientific knowledge and debates, especially in public economics.
- As major bodies managing the transition to a more global society, the G8, G20, World Bank, IMF, and WTO are the core targets of global justice activists. To their mind, these institutions have come to embody both the neoliberal ideology and the technocratic aspect of current global governance.



So, global justice activists attempt to re-insert social and political questions into the issues treated by neoliberal economics as solely involved with the maximisation of efficiency. We know that it is an exciting thing; it is also unfortunate. Because when the development discourse was analysed or when economists sit and then discuss the policy, they seem to be working only based on economic rationality.

As I mentioned, the questions of cultural and social aspects, the whole questions of political questions, representation, and citizenship rights were all seen as irrelevant or as a kind of irritant. I am using their word repeatedly because many economic planners look at that. But now realise that the whole singular rationality of economics, maximising profit, will be a panacea for every problem.

That particular assumption has failed. That assumption has been unable, and increasingly realise that these political and social questions are relevant. They denounced the imposition of neoliberalism by non-accountable experts and barely democratic institutions. To build a fairer

world, they argue for the notion of an active rather than passive citizenship, requiring a public familiar with the scientific knowledge and debates, especially in public economics.

So, economics should not be treated as the realm of select experts with all kinds of jargon, statistics, and other things, so it looks so complicated. But the whole argument about public economics is that the public must be able to engage with it and deliberate on it is something very, very important idea. As major bodies manage the transition at a more global society, the G8, G20, World Bank, IMF, and WTO are the core targets of international justice activists.

But to their mind, these institutions have come to embody both the neo-liberal ideology and the technocratic aspects of current global governance. So, these are the two essential terms that you need to keep in mind. One is the neo-liberal ideology we have discussed.

The second one is this technocratic, maybe mindset or technocratic, techno-managerial way of doing things which are preoccupied with the questions of efficiency, the belief that technology can solve all sorts of problems, the refusal or insensitivity to cultural and social questions, or insensitivity to history or lack of any respect or regards to the social or cultural realms of human beings and the very mechanical instrumentalist use of technology and other things. So, these things can be kind of a deadly combination; it can be a lethal concoction that can bring in quite a lot of negative results.

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- Resistance to globalization is also occurring in the form of extreme right political movements that seek to defend ideas such as frontier-style self-determination, national isolationism and fundamentalist culture against what they perceive as the growing imposition of total global governance, in some cases, or modern liberal and secular culture, in others.
- Since the 1990s, there has been a dramatic rise in fascist groups and ultra-nationalist and xenophobic politics in European countries, USA and many other nations.
- Promises of a border-less world looks less plausible



So, we see the global justice activists now believe that it is time to implement concrete alternatives. And three options that they suggest are to citizens and experts, advocacy networks, and citizens to not live as passive citizens but to take the role of active citizens, who are conscious of their rights.

Citizens who are sensitive to their surroundings, who think about the future, think about different imaginations. And a focus on a local level, community development through local autonomy, participatory self-government, alternate education systems and improvement in their quality of life.

A set the focus, focus set to the local level, how can you think differently? How can you educate your children differently? How can you take care of your health differently? How can you produce your food differently? How can you create a self-sufficient community differently? So, focusing on the grassroots and supporting the progressive regimes. There is another significant set, saying that you would not do anything without political power.

So, you are responsible for supporting the progressive, democratic, environmentally friendly political outfits and regimes rather than the other, rather than its enemies. So, resistance to globalization is also occurring in the form of extreme-right political movements that seek different ideas such as a frontier-style, self-determination, national isolationism and

fundamentalist culture against what they perceive as the growing imposition of total global governance in some cases, or modern liberal and secular culture in others.

So, this again, which we will discuss in the coming class as well, there is a global proliferation of fundamentalist groups, groups who want to protect their own culture from the invasion of others, people who are against ideas of secularism, people who are against views of the universal discourse of rights. So, they feel threatened under this global scenario, and they want to stop the process of globalization.

Since the 1990s, there has been a dramatic rise in fascist groups and ultra-nationalist and xenophobic politics in European countries, the USA and many other nations. And I am not going to elaborate on this; we will come back to this later. But we know that in every country, for the last 10 or 15 years, these right-wing political parties, which are ultra-nationalist, are not about nationalism. Still, it is about ultra-nationalist or very violent nationalist groups that have come up in several countries in Germany, in the US in several other countries. So, promises of a borderless world now look less plausible. The idea that a nation-state will lose its significance and other things looks weak now.

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- The 'Trump phenomenon' in the US and lingering influence of 'Trumpism' despite his electoral defeat
- Heightening sentiment against migrants, refugees etc
- Strengthening religious fundamentalism across the globe and its implications
- Enforced cosmopolitization and its consequences



The Trump phenomenon in the US and the lingering influence of Trumpism, despite his electoral defeat, you know that those who follow the developments in the US will realise that the kinds of

sentiments that Donald Trump represented with a mix of more fundamentalist Christian beliefs, very protectionist economic ideas, and a tendency, emotions against people coming in. So, these are all will and a very, very big dose of white supremacy.

So, they are going to continue, they will linger in the US culture, and then it is tough to fight that. And so, there is a heightening sentiment against migrants, refugees, international labourers; we know the story of a Mexican wall and how he changed the visa rules. So, that is the kind of society that we are in—and then strengthening religious fundamentalism across the globe and its implication. Again, I do not want to go into that now due to the lack of time.

But the religious fundamentalism religious violence across religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, across the globe, we are witnessing that. So, the whole argument is the kind of an enforced cosmopolitisation as what Ulrich Beck would call that you are becoming cosmopolitan. Still, it is not a voluntary cosmopolitisation, but it is an enforced sophisticated nation.

You are forced to become cosmopolitan; because of migrant labourers, refugees, and tourists, you are supposed to encounter the other in your everyday life, maybe even including inside your own house. So, that enforced cosmopolitisation will have a kind of backlash; it is what we are witnessing today.

So, this whole, let me wind up now, this whole phenomenon of anti-globalization, the sentiments against anti-globalization, the movements against anti-globalization are a very, very fascinating area for you to explore because it tells you why there is resistance against globalization, what are the ideological premises from which this opposition is articulated.

And it also tells you what the alternatives are, what are the kind of alternative imaginations that different sections of people have about a much better future, better kind of a more beautiful world for the future generations. So, let us stop here, and we will come back for the next class; thank you.