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Globalization in Question: Hierarchies, States and Gender

I. Introduction

Globalization is the pervasive buzzword of the day as we enter the new millennium. From the BBC's Reith lecturers to first-year undergraduates at Bradford University, almost everybody on the ground has a pretty shrewd idea of what globalization means - the rise of the global society, economy and polity. Nevertheless, the perception is widespread that the term 'globalization' is persistent, over-used and under-defined (Devetak and Higgott 1999).

The first section below investigates further what globalization means or is - and whether it can really be demonstrated to exist. Globalization, whether conceived primarily in terms of markets or in its political or other ramifications, leads us to view the world 'in the round' (Keens-Soper 2000, 54). *The Courier (1997)* also emphasized the importance of the geographical dimension of globalization in French and other Latin-based languages. But this article argues that the spherical shape of globalization is misleading; globalization is more like a pyramid with powerful elite states, corporations and persons (the latter mostly male) at the top and the more powerless, peripheral and disproportionately female entities at the bottom.

The next two sections analyse the respective roles of the United States and European Union, two of the political entities which aim to be at the top of the pyramid of globalization. In view of the powerful impact of US, globalization might almost be considered Americanization writ large. However, other actors including the EU are also important.

Section IV assesses some problems at the base of the pyramid of globalization: marginalisation, poverty, inequality, conflict and hunger. The last section confronts another area at the bottom of the pyramid: the under-addressed issues of gender and globalization. It also examines the emergent global women's movement.

II. Getting to Grips with Globalization

When we look for academic definitions or explanations of globalization the picture appears complicated and definitions of globalization tend to arrive, like London buses, in groups of three or more (e.g. Baylis and Smith, 1997). The phenomenon of globalization

crosses academic boundaries as economists, political scientists, sociologists, cultural theorists and others get to grips with the many facets of globalization.

In popular parlance, globalisation can take on even more curious twists like the sign of the demonstrator at the 1999 Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization which read, 'The worldwide movement against globalization' (Patten 2000).²

In the mainstream international debate, to decision-makers in Europe, the US and elsewhere, globalization means one overarching thing: economic integration. Sir Leon Brittan, Vice-President of the European Commission, noted in February 1999 that over the past fifty years there had been increased international trade, unparalleled economic growth, liberalised markets and, increasingly, global rules for industries. But what "brought home the reality of globalization" was the Asian crisis of 1997, caused by the imperfect application of the neo-liberal model of open markets (Brittan 1999).

In its study of globalization and employment, the The Panos Briefing had no doubts about what constituted the primary factor and motor force of the process, defining globalization as "the move towards a global economy where national borders cease to matter (Panos Briefing 1999). Hirst and Thompson (1996) were critical of claims that the globalization process was unprecedented and irresistible, but agreed that the fundamental basis of globalization was economic.

The World Bank's summation of globalization was succinct: "the integration of the world economy" (World Bank 2000, back cover). But interestingly, the World Bank saw globalization not as a stand alone process, but as half of a pair of conflicting but coexisting trends. Globalization or increasing integration was fuelled by technological advances in communication, multinational corporations' production methods, increasing trade and financial flows and environmental challenges (the latter too-often neglected by academic theorists of globalization). Indeed, the spread of the concept of globalization - conceptualizing the world as a single system -owes as much to the phenomenal sales of the Club of Rome's 1970 book, *The Limits to Growth*, as to the present debates about the world economy.

To the World Bank, the trend towards globalization has to be seen alongside localization, the increasing demand for local autonomy, fed by rising levels of education and communications technology, and the failure of most centrally planned economies (World Bank 2000). These trends were caricatured by Barber (2000) as the struggle between the equal but opposing forces of Jihad (war, division, parochialism) and McWorld (integration, uniformity, corporate dominance). It has been argued,

2. The logic of developing a global movement to oppose globalization is reminiscent of the popular slogan, 'eschew obfuscation.'

particularly within cultural studies, that globalization creates its own universe and exists only in its own terms, measurable only against itself. Globalization knows only its own borders; it is 'a context which is isomorphic with itself' (Franklin, Lury and Stacey 2000, 10). The issue of whether globalization exists in a dialectic with an opponent force of localization re-emerges in section III on globalization and the EU and in section VI on gender issues.

Academics have struggled to define the concept of globalization, producing quite different results and, inevitably, leaving out significant aspects. Baylis and Smith contend that the term 'globalization' became rife in the 1980s in many fields and in many languages. They even deploy the term 'globality', the state of being global, as well as the process of globalization. Nevertheless, talking about globalization becomes, for them, 'global speak', connoting a degree of overkill or even meaninglessness in the concept (Baylis and Smith 1997, 14). Thomas Friedman expressed a similar perplexity by arguing that 'globalization is everything and its opposite' (Friedman 1999, 406).

After collecting seven different definitions or descriptions of globalization, Baylis and Smith produced one which, for an international relations textbook has a surprisingly sociological cast, drawing heavily on the work of Anthony Giddens: 'globalization refers to processes whereby social relations acquire relatively distanceless and borderless qualities, so that human lives are increasingly played out in the world as a single place.' (Baylis and Smith 1997, 14).

Jackson and Sorenson discuss globalization and its potential threat to the system of nation states lucidly in their 1999 international relations textbook. They produce a compact definition or summary of globalization as: 'the spread and intensification of economic, cultural and social relations' (Jackson and Sorenson 1999, 206). But while recognizing in their definition that globalization has additional layers, Jackson and Sorenson focus in practice on the economic ones, asking whether globalization might not be called 'intensified interdependence' but concluding that it implies a qualitative shift from economic interdependence to a consolidated global marketplace (Jackson and Sorenson 1999, 207). They are convinced that different theoretical approaches to globalization -liberal, neo-mercantilist, neo-marxist - pose important questions, but rightly express uncertainty as to whether these questions have yet been answered (Jackson and Sorenson 1999, 212). Without fairly clear answers to these questions, it is tempting to agree with the global entrepreneur Anita Roddick who declared:

"Ah! the global economy: What wealth! What harmony! What rubbish!" (Thoresby 1999)

On one hand, today's 'globalization' can be conceptualised as merely an extension of the process of capitalist expansion described by Marx and Engels in 1865:

"All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe." (Marx and Engels 1969, 46-7).

On the other hand, globalization answers current needs: it addresses the subjective need to describe a changing world order rather than a precise empirical measure. If we measure trade or capital flows between states, levels today have not surpassed those of 1914 (Hirst and Thompson 1996). Neither do the current restrictions on the mobility of labour or the primarily still state-based military forces indicate global integration. Conditions and rules within states vary widely, but personally, Waltz argued "one feels that the world has become a smaller one. International travel has become faster, easier and cheaper; music, art, cuisines and cinema have all become cosmopolitan in the world's major centers and beyond" (Waltz 1999)

As well as the meeting the subjective need of individuals to describe changes in their lives, globalization answers the historian's and political scientist's need to name the current stage of society after the fall of the Berlin Wall. John Zysman observed in 1991, with a degree of bewilderment, that after the Cold War "Now a new reality confronts us, in pieces, in fragments and in isolated controversies, but not yet as a whole." (Zysman 1991, 103) But by 1999 the best-selling author of a wide-ranging tome on globalization, Thomas Friedman, addressed the question of naming the post Cold War reality. Like Richard Falk (1999), Friedman concluded that the new, defining international system which replaced the Cold War was called globalization (Friedman 1999, 7). Whereas the Cold War system had been characterized by walls and divisions, the pre-eminent feature of the new globalization system was integration. Globalization meant:

'the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before-in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that is enabling the world to reach into individuals, corporations and nation-states farther, faster deeper, cheaper than ever before.' (Friedman 1999, 9)

For Michael Veseth, globalization was one of the world's most powerful and persuasive images (Veseth 1998). But like Anita Roddick he had doubts about it. To Veseth, globalization was largely a myth, and one sold to the public for self-interested reasons by powerful special interests such as corporations, management consultants, economists, states, and the EU. Globalization can be used as the excuse or the reason to carry out almost any kind of policy which one has already chosen. UK Chancellor Gordon Brown, for instance, used the image of global economic forces to call for the neo-liberal policy of restructuring of domestic labour, capital and product markets, as well as for the ideologically contradictory economic policy of providing of more state aid to industry (Groom 2001). In the case of the European Union, the threats and opportunities of

globalization are readily employed by those who want to institute previously unacceptable labour market reforms or to unite their currencies (Veseth 1998).

The forces of globalization, while real, are not irresistible (Veseth 1998). The popular idea that geography, territory and distance no longer matter is vastly exaggerated. Trade and financial markets have been integrated since the 1890s in a manner not strikingly outstripped today. Neither have the diversity of world cultures or the power of nation-states been eradicated by globalization. Firms like Microsoft or Coca-Cola are multi-local, functioning in many local markets, rather than global, i.e. based on a global market. The important constraints on globalization, such as financial instability (see Sachs 2000), state power, personal relationships, local resource and consumption pools mean that globalization may never progress much beyond its level today (Veseth 1998).

In summary, popular concepts of globalization are widely divergent. They range from inevitable forces of contemporary economic integration to a process restrained by and at odds with localization. Globalization can be conceived as a qualitative change in the world today, or as is the mere continuation of a process that began with industrialization. Concepts range from a process that is progressive and irresistible to one that is unstable and fragmented, not benefiting all parts of society, and not necessarily leading in a straight path to the borderless world.

III. Globalization or Americanization?

Globalization is one way for journalists and social scientists to describe contemporary trends in a metatheoretical or transdisciplinary way. Like the discourses of post-modernism in the 1970s and 80s, globalization has become a part of popular culture. As a popular way to categorize a phase in history or the world system as a whole, globalization risks becoming over-generalized and over-simplified. The formulations of the global and the local in contemporary social theory have been 'somewhat closed, somewhat over-integrated, and somewhat over-systematised' (Hall quoted in Franklin, Lury and Stacey, 2000, 4). By trying to explain everything, globalization risks explaining nothing. It can present a spurious vision of the world as a single place. The concepts of globalization may become mere totalising theories, presenting a distorted view of reality (Franklin, Lury and Stacey, 2000).

At the center of the globalization debate is the question of the role of the USA. On one hand globalization is a random and leaderless phenomenon, relatively normless and 'designer-free' in the words of Richard Falk (1999). No-one is directing globalization; no-one is in charge or to blame for it (Friedman 1999). Globalization results from free market forces and the development of technology.

On the other hand, globalization can be seen as the USA writ large. Like other elements of popular culture such as pop music or clothing, globalization stems from the USA. "Globalization is the fad of the 1990s, and globalization is made in America," Kenneth Waltz argued. (Waltz 1999, 694). Although globalization was not planned by the US, the process is protected by a benign American hegemony (Waltz 1999). This

hegemony extends to dominance in the economic, political and social structures, as well as setting norms for the behaviour of states and transborder civil society organizations (Cox 1983).

This raises the question of whether 'globalization' is the correct name for the process under examination at all? Is it better termed 'Americanization' - the spread of the United States' culture, values, technology, economic, political and military systems across the globe- and only thinly disguised as the inevitable march of stateless markets? There may not be so much a process of globalization occurring under a detached American watchfulness, but a process which can be called hegemonic globalization, universalizing the values, politics, and language of the USA.

Among languages, English is the parlance of globalization par excellence. It accounts for 86.55% of all internet documents. (Times 2000; Fishman 1998). The spread of English is a consequence of British colonialism, and more recently, US hegemony (Jackson and Sorenson, 1999; Stacy, Lury and Franklin, 2000). The widespread use of English also intensifies the process of globalization as news media, multinational corporations, international scientists, professionals and the global upper classes increasingly use American English to communicate. Nevertheless, the rise of English on the global level does not preclude the expansion of regional languages like Hindi and Spanish-or of local ones like Irish Gaelic (Fishman 1998).

The twentieth century has long been termed 'the American Century' borrowing the title of Henry Luce's 1941 essay (Pfaff 2000). Much political and academic debate today suggests that the 21st century stands to be again dominated by the US as the leading player, with unmatched leadership possibilities in its information technology and biotechnology enterprises:

"the U.S. enters the 21st century in a position of unrivaled dominance that surpasses anything it experienced in the 20th. Coming out of World War II, the U.S. may have controlled a larger share of world output; but it also faced threats to its security and its ideology. Today, those threats are gone, and the nation far outstrips its nearest rivals in economic and military power and cultural influence. America's free-market ideology is now the world's ideology" (Murray 1999).

In his 2000 'State of the Union' address, US President Clinton addressed the subject of globalization. He argued that for the sake of its economic prosperity America had not only to embrace globalization, but to mould it in America's image. This involved not only more trade liberalization, but also the uniting of the world in democracy, freedom and peace:

"To realize the full possibilities of this economy, we must reach beyond our borders, to shape the revolution that is tearing down barriers and building new networks among nations and individuals, and economies and cultures: globalization. It's the central reality of our time." (Clinton 2000)

But the US is not alone in wanting to be at the top of the pyramid of globalization, and to mould or stamp its mark on this process in the twenty-first century. The European Union too faces emergent global forces it wants to shape. Europe, too, sees itself as a model for world governance.

The 'made in America' image of globalization is not unchallengeable. In addition to the neo-liberal values based in the US, and the prominence of US corporations, other factors have shaped the globalization process. These include the political aspirations of the EU, and its corporations from Royal Dutch Shell to BP, as well as corporations based in other regions, the imprints of leaders like Mandela, Arafat and Yeltsin, and the images of appalling wars and conflicts like those of Rwanda, Liberia, and Serbia. It has been argued that globalization will replace war with economic competition as the primary generative force of our time (Keens-Soper 2000), but it is more likely that globalization will affect or encompass wars, as argued below, rather than replace them. The next section will analyse the European Union's relationship to globalization.

III. Aiming for the top: the pyramid of globalization and the EU

For the EU, globalization has several meanings. On one hand, it means becoming a global actor, taking on a larger political role as its 'richer but inevitably more complex relations with the rest of the world' unfold (European Commission 1997a, 36). The global actor or superpower EU will need to take its responsibilities seriously, strengthen its decision-making capacity, ensure consistency in all its actions and build an integrated approach to its external relations (European Commission 1997a).

Globalization also means more international economic integration. European business elites increasingly identify themselves as citizens of Europe-or even as global citizens (Falk 1999). Political, security and immigration decisions are increasingly no longer the sole province of the national state (Wallace 1996). For the EU, the advent of its single currency, the Euro, the external potential of the Single Market and the Union's ability to act cohesively in promoting further international trade liberalization through the WTO are potentially of great benefit. Jerome Vignon, Chief Adviser to the EU's Forward Studies Unit, argued that since 1985 the Union had been preparing to become a global economic player. The EU planned to have the Euro act as a strong international reserve currency, so that the Europeans would 'command respect' (Vignon 1997). But globalization also means facing global-level problems. These include demographic imbalances, failures in governance and environmental mismanagement. Drug trafficking and international crime are also globalised problems (European Commission 1997a).

The powerful and ineluctable forces of globalization could overwhelm small states (Mayall 1998), sweeping aside their traditional economic and political relations. On the other hand, the forces of globalization can produce a backlash, resulting, for instance, in an intensified 'Europeanization' as regional integration is used by middle level states to resist external pressures. Hirst and Thompson (1996) noted the shortage of theories spanning the gap between the global and the national level, and focused their own

discussion on traditional problems of European integration and Europe's international role rather than on the relationship between regional and global architecture.

There is a significant debate as to whether regionalisation is a complement or an alternative to globalization (Lister 1998, 2; Keens-Soper 2000). In the case of Europe, was post-war European integration a way for Europe to respond positively to globalizing forces or a way to reject them? The answer seems to be - both. West European integration in essence represented a policy effort both to participate in the bi-polar postwar global system and to limit its effects (Wallace 1996). The European Community arose not only from the cultural remnants of Rome, or the integrationist dreams of Napoleon, but also from practical efforts to stretch the state and to 'harden' the boundaries between Europe and the world (Wallace 1996). Thus, 'Europeanization' or the rise of European-level norms and values can be seen both as a consequence of, and an alternative to, globalization.

As well as the multilateral or global trade liberalization of the successive GATT negotiating rounds, many authors have discerned a trend towards the rise of regional trading blocs such as NAFTA, APEC, the European Union. These trade blocs may cause their members to orient their trade not globally, but to regional standards and markets (Tovias 1999). In the case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the EU's agreement with 12 non-member southern Mediterranean countries, the regional standards will be set in Brussels (Tovias 1999). The effects of globalization and relations with Europe on the post-Cold War Middle East have fostered national rather than regional identities. According to Sayigh, the Middle East has so far been resistant to many aspects of globalization. North African economies, several with oil wealth, have integrated further into the global economy, but political liberalization in these states has resulted in a new mixture of political authoritarianism and economic liberalism. Economic relations with the EU have had the effect of orienting the southern Mediterranean economies towards Europe, but individually instead of as a region (Sayigh 1999).

Robert Cox (1991) envisaged a Europe challenged in the next century to keep its independent identity, buffeted by imported political ideas and migrants from the East. It would be further confronted with the choice of whether to continue to accept US support for global economic liberalism. To Cox, Europe needed to free itself from the old view of the Third World (3) as marginal, and move towards a more positive form of coexistence. Cox concluded that Europe could be posthegemonic (i.e. coexisting peacefully with other civilizations), post-Westphalian in moving beyond the nation state, and postglobalization in accepting different paths towards satisfying human needs.

From the perspective of global governance, Cox argued, the new reality meant that some elements of the Third World become integrated into the globalization system; others remain excluded and treated by the global authorities with a combination of global

poor relief (better known as development aid) and riot control in the form of the newly popular rapid deployment forces of the developed countries (Cox 1991).

George and Bache (2001) returned to a traditional economic analysis of the EU and globalization. Although globalization had cultural and social aspects, they argued that it was economics-driven. For them, globalization primarily meant changes in the economic system to which governments responded, and in the main they responded in ways that reinforced globalization. Global pressures meant different styles of capitalisms in Western Europe were being replaced by a common, neo-liberal model based on the US. The EU-level response to the pressures of globalization also allowed its member governments the convenience of blaming their policy changes on the European Commission (George and Bache 2001).

Catherine Hoskyns (2000) examined the EU's input into gender and globalisation issues and concluded that for the EU gender was an issue which operated primarily at the level of elites rather than the grassroots. The EU conceived of women primarily as workers, and offered them some benefits in terms of law and employment conditions. But as workers, European women were subordinated to the male breadwinner model (Young 2001). Women were never mobilized at EU level around gender issues. Hoskyns found that in the 1990s decisions of the European Court were less radical or positive towards women than previously, and gender risked becoming a marginalized or ghettoized issue (Hoskyns 2000). While women in Europe made advances overall, the conditions of the women with the fewest privileges and resources continued to deteriorate (Hoskyns 1996). Nevertheless, women in Europe would have been worse off without the EU's gender policy (Hoskyns 2000).

To Commission President Romano Prodi, the challenge for Europe in the 21st century was not to travel new and different paths, but to take its place in the world as a global economic and civil power. For Prodi, the EU's need to stamp its mark on globalization stemmed from its internal political weakness as much as its economic strength. To combat its citizens' general disenchantment with the EU and its institutions, Europe needed to find a sense of meaning and purpose; it needed to project its model of society on the wider world. This model included liberation from poverty, war, oppression and intolerance; continental political integration, democracy, freedom and solidarity (Prodi 2000).

Whereas globalization has been seen as a progenitor of EU integration, causing the EU states to come together to protect themselves from external forces (be they political, economic, technological or cultural) and to compete more successfully in a global market, globalization has different meanings for a lower level of the international pyramid, the developing world.

IV Globalization - Some problems at the Base of the Pyramid

Within the process of globalization some individuals (especially women), groups and states are unlikely to benefit. For them, globalization means being poor and economically

vulnerable, politically powerless and socially marginalized. Caroline Thomas (1999) argued that at the end of the twentieth century the Third World had not dissolved as a grouping, as was widely believed, but had been globalized. That is, in addition to the traditional developing countries, the 'Third World' now included more countries, such as the former socialist countries, and more poor people- both in poor countries and in the rich world. Clearly, the Third World as a political force with defined goals does not exist in the way it did in the 1970s, but it can be conceptualized as an increasingly marginalized layer of the global pyramid.

At the top of the pyramid is "An emerging global elite, mostly urban based and interconnected....while over half of humanity is left out." (Speth quoted in Thomas 1999). This largely male and white elite depend more on the 'club of money' than on national identity (Young 2001). The world's workers can be divided into the elite with specialized skills; those whose jobs are precarious and depend on the vagaries of the markets; and the growing number of unemployed, low-skilled and marginalized people. Among the latter groups are disproportionately concentrated the old, the young, disabled people, members of ethnic minorities, and women (Thomas 1999).

There is no question that poverty and deprivation remain huge global problems and on many measures economic inequalities have been increasing. In 1960 the richest 20% of the global population had incomes 30 times greater than the poorest 20%. By 1997 the difference had increased to 74 times. (Dickson 2000) Chen and Ravallion (2000) argued that the most important factor in rising global inequality was growing inequalities between countries; in addition the consistently high levels of inequality in many poor countries could constrain pro-poor growth.

One in five of the global population live on less than US \$1 per day, and 2/3 of these people are women (White Paper 2000) Based on this measure of extreme poverty, from 1990 to 1998 numbers declined from 1.3 to 1.2 billion persons, but this fall was based solely on improvements in East Asia and the Pacific region (White Paper 2001). Recent evidence suggests that instead of falling to the international target of .9 bn, numbers of people in extreme poverty will climb to 1.9 bn by 2015 (Dickson 2000).

Since globalization can be very broadly conceived in terms of economic, political, social, technological processes, or as a stage of history, its impacts are also wide. Another emerging facet of globalization is conflict, especially in the global periphery, at the base of the pyramid of globalization. To what extent can the prevalence of largely intra-state conflicts since the late 20th century be attributed to the process of globalization?

Late 20th century conflicts such as those in the former Yugoslavia, central Africa or Colombia have much to do with the effects of poverty, the legacy of colonialism and misrule, and the self-serving opportunism of some politicians (Lemarchand 1994). But the rise of a global information society and economy cannot be discounted as factors contributing to civil wars (e.g. Algeria), transborder wars (e.g. Ethiopia-Eritrea), or terrorism. The prevalence of post-modern wars where objectives are unclear, ideologies

are lacking, actors are many and various and violence is appalling can be connected to globalisation. Duffield argued "post-modern conflict reflects the manner in which political authority is being restructured in parts of the South under the influence of globalisation." (Duffield 1998, 17) The European Union has responded to these 'new internal wars' or 'postmodern conflicts' through new provisions in the Cotonou Agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, and through establishing its own rapid reaction force while the United States under the Bush administration has struggled with a new kind of warfare in the 21st century.

In addition to the state and ethnic group levels of conflict, the global periphery suffers from what UNICEF has called a global epidemic of violence against women and girls (UNICEF 2000). Processes of development which disrupt traditional norms and structures while bringing women more into the public sphere and the workplace have exacerbated violence against women in countries like Papua New Guinea (Bradley 1994). Murder and rape levels in South Africa have reached unprecedented levels with rape cases reaching a million a year - or one rape every 30 seconds (Jorde 2000).

Global capitalism can also have negative effects on food production, exacerbating hunger in poorer parts of the world. For instance, in traditional societies there was a relationship of mutual interest between landowners and tenant farmers. The landowners needed the tenants' ability to produce food and thereby feed both themselves and the landowners. But as this system is replaced by capitalist relations, with tenants as replaceable inputs, the landowner looks for profits rather than food production. Thus, despite the introduction of mechanization, technological inputs, and large scale farming, countries like Sudan are unable to feed themselves (Bennett and George 1987). Global conferences like the World Food Summit of 1996 produced declarations and targets for reducing hunger, but so far have failed to solve the global problems of famine and chronic hunger (FAO 2001)

Concerns over the process of globalization have led to a variety of counter-movements. Falk (1999) argued for the necessity of a process of 'globalization from below' to restore the earlier relationship between people, state and capital. Civil society groups would pressure the state to restore its legitimacy and negotiate new relations between the people and capitalist interests in a new kind of social contract. This process would counteract the predatory, capitalist forces of 'globalization from above'.

For the left, globalization can be argued to provide the target needed to crystallize opposition (Veseth 1998). Storr (2000) classified the anti-globalization movement in three divisions: peace and human rights groups who opposed corporate dominance and wanted to reinforce state power; internationalist populist groups including environmentalists, socialists and Zapatistas who wanted new modes of governance; and delinking groups including anarchists and religious nationalists who favored local sovereignty. Notable by their absence from this analysis are feminist groups; in fact Storr explicitly doubted the relevance of feminist groups to the anti-globalization struggle. Women were too concerned with the private sphere and their economic interests. They lacked a common identity. While women had developed expertise in

attacking men in their vulnerable parts (sic), Storr wondered "whether globalization has balls? (Storr 2000, 29)

Storr echoed the traditional belief that women's concerns were those of the private sphere of home and hearth rather than the public sphere of globalization. In Storr's odd viewpoint, unlike the economic concerns of farmers, or indigenous groups, women's economic concerns were irrelevant to the anti-globalization movement. Moreover, women's groups were only able to attack male entities, while corporations and globalization were ungendered and therefore outside their purview. But in reality women's groups have been involved both in the 1999 'battle in Seattle' protests against the WTO and in other economic campaigns (UNIFEM 2000).

The following section examines the important linkages between globalization and gender which Storr and other authors have missed or denied.

IV. Globalization and Gender

In studying the literature of globalization, it is very easy to get lost in the trees of NIKE or IBM and to lose sight of the forest-or to look at the forest as a whole and miss a large number of the trees. Among the trees making up globalization, the agency and interests of women get disproportionately little (or often no) attention. For instance, from Hirst and Thompson's (1999) detailed analysis to George and Bache's (2001) discussion of the EU and globalization, the issue of gender is neglected. Even analyses which are sensitive to various social problems caused by globalization, often don't highlight the relation of these problems to gender issues (e.g. Hirst and Thompson 1996, Falk 1999; also observed by Franklin, Lury, and Stacey, 2000; Wichterich 2001, Jacobs 2000).

This section will not undertake to examine to what extent women's lives do have a basic commonality or share the experience of gender as a defining characteristic (Anderson and Zinsser 1990) . Rather it aims to examine some of the effects of contemporary globalization on women. It agrees with Sheila Allen (1999) that there is no one feminist approach to globalization, but that the concept of gender is central to the investigation of globalization and to improving the lives of people. The optimistic view that the linkages of the globalized economy and internet would necessarily have a positive, socially transformative effect on women's lives may not necessarily be the case. Historically, the intellectually liberating scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries was merely used to confirm misogynist stereotypes of women while the centralization, rationalization and uniformity of law, economy and society in the late nineteenth century, limited rather than expanded women's' opportunities (Anderson and Zinsser 1990). It is also uncertain if the rationalization and uniformity of globalization will work to empower women today.

Afshar and Barrientos rightly argued that the mainstream debate on globalization largely ignored its effects on women, marginalized groups and ethnic minorities. Moreover, the benefits of globalization were concentrated among certain males: "The

almost exclusively male elite who head the transnational companies and the national and international bureaucrats who facilitate the process have profited most, and have enthusiastically welcomed the new global order." (Afshar and Barrientos 1999, 3)

The assumption that globalization would benefit women seemed generally unfounded as the benefits of greater access to paid employment were often offset by the poor pay and conditions, and insecurity of the available work (Afshar and Barrientos 1999; Wichterich 2000). Complex new forms of patriarchal domination replaced those edged out by the global marketplace as women took up poorly paid jobs such as fruit picking in the developing world or part-time shiftwork in supermarkets in the UK (Barrientos and Perrons 1999). Dolan (2001) found that the new export horticulture in Kenya resulted in greater workloads, less income, less access to land for women and even increased domestic violence as men competed with women for their land and income. In Miami, globalization meant that Cuban women filled the textile sweatshops while men had higher positions as contractors and subcontractors (Young 2001).

Christa Wichterich argued that although women's lives are profoundly affected by globalization, "The global market place is male and white." (Wichterich 2000, viii). For Wichterich the blithe statement by the industrial G-7 states that everyone would benefit from globalization overlooked the truth that most women would not. Nevertheless women's lives, she argued, have become more similar- or globalized – as they increasingly enter low-paid employment, with concomitant competition, insecurity, exposure to sexist violence and growing consumerism (Wichterich 2000, ix). Women in Asia might find some new freedom in the space between the dominance of global capitalism and the old patriarchy, but this did not include economic equality with men. (Wichterich 2000). Female wages in the late 1990s in all the 63 countries for which statistics were obtained, including the United States and Western Europe, in industry, services and manufacturing were significantly lower than male wages. Assessing the gap over time was difficult on the evidence available, but it seems unlikely that the pay gap in the formal sector was increasing (UNIFEM 2000, 92). However, in several countries in Latin America and in the UK growing inequalities between high-skilled and less-skilled women were noted (UNIFEM 2000, 95).

Globalization, Women and Information and Communications Technologies

Along with the global marketplace, the rise of global communications technology forms a big part of the concept of globalization. Computer and internet access are considered valuable as a source of employment, and as a tool for political action and democratization (Jensen 2000). To what extent does the new technology of the internet offer women special benefits? Women are a minority of internet users – and even the cultural image of the internet user (and hacker) is male (Wichterich 2000). Poor women, particularly those in poor countries, who lack knowledge and skills including literacy, and lack the access to expensive equipment are particularly at a disadvantage in terms of internet use (UNIFEM 2000). In Germany, 90% of Internet

users were male (Wichterich 2000) while for Ethiopia 86%, Senegal 83% and Zambia 64% of internet users were male (Jensen 2000).

Despite these obstacles, a variety of institutions, networks and individuals have been working to overcome women's disadvantage in internet access and use. The International Women's Communication Centre (IWCC) based in Nigeria circulates information from the internet to grassroots women. It also operates as a branch office for a variety of international ngos such as Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women and Wings Nigeria-Information Gathering on Women (Unifem 2000) In South Africa WomensNet uses the internet to help women's organizations meet each other, discuss issues and share resources and information. It also aims to disseminate gender-oriented information over community radio stations (UNIFEM 2000) Development projects like the Acacia project in Senegal funded by the International Development Research Centre seek to facilitate knowledge about and access to ICTs for marginalized sectors of society, notably women and youth (IDRC 2001) The World Bank's INFODEV programme is funding a project on 'Strengthening Women's Leadership in Community Development through RadioInternet in Brazil' (INFODEV 2001), while the United Nations Development Fund for Women UNIFEM has supported a variety of internet access initiatives and networks for women and ngos. The World Bank Institute's 'Virtual Souk' internet project helps to market the traditional crafts of artisans in Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon – 75 to 80% of whom are women (UNIFEM 2000).

Nevertheless, access to communications and internet technology alone does not guarantee women's equality. Women in developed and developing countries can be stuck at the bottom level of the virtual office. In Jamaica and Malaysia women worked as low-paid keyboard operators, in high pressure jobs without opportunities for further training or promotion. A study in Brazil showed that women with the same level of training in computer programming as their male counterparts had fewer career opportunities. For women who do online work at home in Germany, the employing company's publicity image of the worker holding her baby with one hand while typing on the computer with the other suggests the new technologies are bringing women considerable problems of overload (Wichterich 2000) rather than liberation.

The global women's movement

It has been argued that the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 – with its accompanying flurry of emails, faxes, meetings, faxes and internet sites – meant a sea change in women's activism. New communications technologies allowed thousands of women to be informed about the debates, to participate in discussions and lobbying, and to make their voices heard. Nevertheless, participation was not open to those without the requisite access to the technologies; and for the poor, the unskilled and non-English speakers getting such access could be difficult. (Scott 2001).

Anne Scott contended that the material processes of communication in this and previous periods greatly affected the character of the accompanying feminist movements. (Scott 2001). For Wichterich, the new international women's politics from below began not with the first UN Conference on Women in 1975, but only in 1991 in the run up to the Earth Summit, and would have been unthinkable without the existence of the new communications technologies 'which are not only its key tools but also a field of action that forms and shapes the movement.' (Wichterich 1990, 153).

New technologies were closely involved in the fact that the Beijing Conference marked the creation of a global women's movement in a way which neither liberal women's movements of the nineteenth century (Scott 2001) nor the international socialist feminist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had done. The international socialist feminist movement -which gave us International Women's Day in 1910 (Anderson and Zinsser 1990) – is notable today largely by its absence in the literature of globalization and even in the analysis of women's role in postcommunist Europe (Rueschmeyer 1998).

Whether or not a truly global women's movement exists is a subject of contention. For Moghadam (2000), despite local differences there is a global network of feminism with a universalistic discourse. By contrast, Wichterich (2000, 147) argued that women's movements "have spread to the farthest corner of this patriarchal planet and succeeded in forging closer links with one another, but at the same time they have remained diverse and fragmented." For Wichterich, the only spheres of action of the global women's movement were UN conferences and the internet.

Jacobs (2000) warned that although globalization increased the chances for women to organize themselves, this was only one possible outcome of the process. Most women's organizations, she argued, remained nationally oriented. The inherent distinctiveness of women's movements under Islam was emphasized by Afshar (2001) and this might also be argued to militate against the emergence of a global movement.

Whether the new globalized feminism will be more effective than the older variants in improving women's lives and conditions, remains to be seen (Scott 2001). Several examples of successful lobbying from women's organizations were cited by Moghadam (2000). These, including US non-recognition of the Taliban, prevention of a gas pipeline in Afghanistan and raising women's issues within the structure of the World Bank, stretch beyond the spheres of action identified by Wichterich, but are modest overall. Nevertheless, over time the pro-women discussions at international conferences and pro-women internet activities identified by UNIFEM (2000) as e-Inclusion, e-Campaigns, e-Commerce and e-Consultation are likely to have a positive effect on women's lives.

Wichterich reiterated the theme of a dialectic or tension noted above by Barber and the World Bank between the global and the local, or in the case of the EU a dialectic between the global and the regional, as well. There was a tension in the women's movement between the forces of globalization and those of conservatism and tradition

(Wichterich 2000) : “The Women’s International moves between the poles of globalization and localization, networking and splitting.” For Jacobs (2000) and El-Mikawy (2000) the issue of a backlash against a global women’s movement was also important to recognize.

Even within the new global women’s movement, the pyramid of hierarchy can be observed. Relatively well-funded official national delegations to Conferences like Beijing and the follow-up Beijing plus 5 conference, and UN organizations have considerable access to decision-makers and resources. Lower down the pyramid of power and privilege are the women’s non-governmental organizations (ngos). Although women’s ngos may strive to be non-hierarchical in their internal organization (Moghadam 2000), well-paid professional lobbyists, and sophisticated North American ngos like WEDO have been observed to rest higher in the pyramid than small grassroots organizations (Wichterich 2000).

V. Conclusion

This article has investigated ‘globalization in the round’ and found a hierarchical, pyramidal structure. It can be frustrating to investigate a phenomenon which is both over-defined in terms of quantity of writing about it, and under-defined in terms of helpful demarcations. Globalization can almost appear as ‘everything and its opposite’ as Friedman argued. For policy-makers, globalization is primarily conceived in economic terms. It represents the intergration of the world economy-but to what extent there has been a qualitative shift to a global marketplace or global economic actors remains in dispute. National labour markets, national military and political power are by no means superseded by global replacements.

Globalization can also be conceived of as a stage in history. In a period of contradictory forces and uncertainly, it is a popular and useful way of labeling the post-cold war era. Another theme that frequently emerges is that forces of globalization exist in a complex tension with counterforces of localization and regionalization, and it is not always clear that the forces of globalization and integration will be the more powerful.

Globalization has been seen as random and leaderless, propelled by faceless market forces and technologies. On the other hand, it has been argued that globalization is really an extension of the culture, values, language, economic system and economic actors of the United States. But although the role of the US is important, this article argues that other economic and political actors, including those from the European Union, are also important in shaping globalization.

To the European Union’s leaders, globalization means the EU should take a larger political role – including tackling global problems. The challenge for the EU is how to use its process of regional integration to help it participate in global activities without

being overwhelmed. Europe also aspires to project European values and culture, and the EU model of integration, on to the global system.

While some states or other actors aim for the top of the global pyramid, or seek to shape the pyramid itself, those at the bottom aim for survival. The disproportionately white, male global elite include those with valuable specialized skills. While at the base of the pyramid are disproportionately concentrated the old, the young, disabled people, ethnic minorities, women and low-skilled workers who face poverty and deprivation. Rising economic inequality, increases in extreme poverty and hunger, and growing conflicts characterize conditions at the base of the global pyramid.

Gender is one aspect of the pyramid of globalization which has not been widely examined in the mainstream literature. Yet women account for half of the world's population and an increasing proportion of the paid workforce. A gendered analysis is essential to any full examination of globalization processes. While globalization may offer women more opportunities in terms of increased civil liberties or access to paid work, women's jobs often include poorer pay and conditions, greater insecurity and fewer prospects than men's jobs. Even where new technologies are introduced, women can remain at the base of the hierarchy of the virtual office.

It can be argued that there now exists a globalized women's movement, based on the new communications technologies, which aims at a global feminist discourse. But questions are frequently raised over the fragmentation of the women's movement, its success in effecting change, and its relationship to a conservative backlash. Even within the self-consciously democratic international women's movement, organizations or individuals with better access to resources and power may stand higher up the pyramid of globalization than those which lack them.

In conclusion, throughout the discourse of globalization, problems of hierarchies and inequalities of power, wealth and gender emerge. So far, neither the mainstream discourses of social science nor the popular school of 'globalization is good for you' espoused by politicians and journalists have sufficiently addressed these problems of the present era and processes of globalization.

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