Chapter 1

Introduction

Neoliberal Globalization and Third World Women: Exploitation, Coping and Resistance

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Neoliberal globalization is not a neutral process, it is gendered, and has exacerbated domestic and global social inequalities.¹ Thus, a growing resistance against its destructive course and an active search for alternatives is in the making (Smith and Johnston 2002; Brecher, Castello, and Smith 2009; Naples and Desai 2002). Third World women who experience more adversely than First World men and women the negative impact of neoliberal globalization are actively taking part in this growing resistance. The dynamics of power in this dialectics of resistance and change offers insights to better understand neoliberal globalization, rethink the mainstream conceptualization about it, and how we can learn from each other on how to alter its course towards greater global social justice.

We disagree with some who argue that the use of the term “Third World” or “Third World women” is no longer applicable since globalization has increasingly integrated nations of the world. We disagree, first, because such argument tends to imply that neoliberal globalization is a neutral process. It fails to see the hegemonic power (mainly embodied in the G-7) that dominates the formulation of neoliberal policies that advance global capitalism or transnational capital which often, in its constant search for cheap labor and resources, violate the rights of working people and abuse the environment. Second, our use of the term “Third World women” recognizes the uneven impact of neoliberal globalization which has, in many instances, exacerbated gender, race/ethnicity and class inequalities. We use the term “Third World women” as a conceptual category for women marginalized and exploited in the process of neoliberal globalization anywhere, particularly in the non-industrialized world. Their resistance defies the hegemony that neoliberal policies fortify, although the struggle is often difficult and not without problems and risks, especially when the “neoliberal state” (Harvey 2007; Robinson 1996) responds with political and military repression. The concept “Third World women”, therefore, appropriately recognizes the uneven impact of globalization

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on working people, depending on their and their nations’ position and location in the global political economy. We find “Third World women” in poor and rich countries, in the North and South, in the core and periphery/semi-periphery as neoliberal globalization continues to structure and re-structure class, race and gender inequalities. It is therefore important that the experience, voice, and politics of Third World women be de-marginalized and included in the mainstream analysis and knowledge construction about neoliberal globalization. This is the thrust of this volume.

We take this thrust, first, because, as David Harvey (2007, 3) argues, “neoliberalism has become hegemonic as a mode of discourse”. Largely dominated by think-tanks and policy-makers in the North (Appadurai 2001), this hegemonic mode of discourse can be problematic as it creates a dominant ideational structure that can serve the very structures of power and ideologies that are to be challenged in the struggle for global social justice. Second, because learning from the experience of Third World women as they respond to the impact of neoliberal globalization can unearth knowledge from below rarely represented in policy-making and mainstream academic circles. This knowledge can be useful both for questioning neoliberal policies, policy transformation, and shaping strategies for change. At this juncture, it is important that we first define neoliberal globalization for clarification as the term globalization has been used and abused with different shades of meaning.

What is Neoliberal Globalization?

Neoliberal globalization designates the transformation of the global political economy based on neoliberalism as a “theory of political economic practices that human well-being can be best advanced” in economic arrangements that promote “private [ownership of the means of production], free markets, and free trade”, whereby the “role of the state is to create and preserve institutional frameworks” and conditions that will facilitate such practices (Harvey 2007, 2). As an economic project, its basic doctrines of deregulation, privatization, economic liberalization, labor flexibilization and diminished state-supported social provisions (Harvey 2007, Lindio-McGovern 2007) are meant to create the appropriate conditions for the preservation and global expansion of capitalism that has maintained a wealthy transnational capitalist interests that in turn plays an active role in maintaining capitalist globalization (Sklair 2001). Deregulation reduces state regulation of the economy or restrictions on the mobility of capital and labor flexibilization to create an abundant supply of cheap, controllable and disposable labor force, and so create appropriate conditions that facilitate global capital expansion. Economic liberalization—that dismantles restrictions on the flow of goods, services, and foreign investment—promotes transnational capital expansion worldwide. Privatization—that puts public productive and service enterprises into the private sector, reducing state-subsidized social services and reducing
public sector corporations—further opens up new spheres for transnational capital to control local economies especially of the Third World. The global power of transnational corporations thereby grows (Korten 2001; Lindio-McGovern 2007). The IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank that impose structural adjustment policies tied to development loans to the Third World and the WTO (World Trade Organization) that regulate trade have become supra-national structures of power that unfetter the reins of neoliberal globalization. They failed to improve the lives of the marginalized sectors of the global economy, and have even exacerbated their poverty and exploitation.

The major themes woven through the works of the contributors in this volume further illuminate an understanding of the gendered process of globalization and its contestations as they examine the experience of Third World women in both North and South, in Asia, Africa, Latin and Central America.

Globalization and Gendered Regional Inequalities

Most discussions on globalization and global inequality have centered on the global North and South disparity. Such discussions while important, blur the inequalities within regions that may also occur as neoliberalism intensifies gender, class and/or racial inequalities. While the uneven impact of neoliberal globalization has maintained a global core and periphery (North and South), it is also creating a regional core/periphery within the South. One conceptual site to examine the gendered nature of this regional inequality is the circulation of cheap and disposable waged reproductive labor necessary for the maintenance of productive labor, which under neoliberal rule, serves capitalism. Who supplies cheap reproductive labor and who is served? Within a region, an urban center develops where women from poorer countries of the region tend to concentrate to work as domestic workers in middle-class homes. Shireen Ally (Chapter 2 in this volume) calls attention to this phenomenon as she observes it in Southern Africa. Poor women seeking support for their families migrate from the poorer regions of Southern Africa—such as Zimbabwe, Basotho, Mozambique—to better-off South Africa providing the reproductive labor demands of mainly white, middle-class homes, concentrating in Johannesburg, South Africa’s urban center. The presence of these women bifurcates the reproductive labor market and wage structure of reproductive labor where the migrant women are placed at the lower end. The post-apartheid South Africa’s implementation of neoliberal policies (Ally in this volume; Benjamin 2007) has not benefitted women (and men) evenly within South Africa and within the region, perpetuating historically rooted raced and classed/gendered structures. Ally’s observation of regional inequality in Southern Africa corroborates with Lindio-McGovern’s (2004) and Robyn Magalit Rodriguez’s (Chapter 4 in this volume) views on Asia where the rise of the New Industrializing Countries (NICS) has sharpened and given a new face to its regional inequality. Taiwan’s economy, for example, is partly being built on the back of Asian women
from poorer countries in the region—such as the Philippines and Indonesia whose economies have been devastated by neoliberal policies—who provide cheap and disposable reproductive labor, alongside its imported low-waged contract male and female productive labor for companies. There are cases when the migrant women’s reproductive labor is extended and blended with productive labor demands of Taiwanese petty capitalists, a way of making productive labor cheaper. Hong Kong—now under Special Administration of mainland China in the post-British colonial rule—has become an urban hub for Filipino and Indonesian reproductive workers pushed out by the economic pressures due to structural adjustment policies imposed on their home countries.

The regional inequality in the South exacerbated under neoliberal globalization is not entirely isolated or delinked from the social construction of inequalities within the richer capitalist countries that comprise the global North. Martha Gimenez’s (Chapter 3 in this volume) notion of the “circulation of labor” as mirroring the intensified inequalities resulting from the “mobility of capital” under capitalist globalization provides an insight into how the presence of migrants from countries in the South partly makes possible the stratification of the labor market within a Northern country, exemplified for instance by the United States.

The mobility of capital under regimes of labor flexibilization has hurt both the working class in the North and South. The de-industrialization, for example, in the U.S. economy has resulted in greater unemployment for men, bringing more women to the workforce but mostly in the lower ranks of the occupational ladder. The expansion of the service sector under global capitalism along with the contraction of manufacturing jobs due to de-industrialization requires as well cheap labor, and women predominating in this sector provide both cheaper and more expendable labor. Migrant labor is used, legal and illegal, to further depress wages. But while the retrenched American workers may have some cushions—such as welfare or unemployment insurance—the men and women in poor countries in the South usually do not have such cushions, and their migration, then, is often part of a survival or coping strategy. Sometimes, their governments (as in the case of Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico) turn to labor export as a response to both unemployment and debt crisis resulting from the structural adjustment policies, thus facilitating their migration into an economic diaspora. With increasing feminization of international migration, this “circulation of capital” also increasingly gets gendered. Thus, as neoliberal policies of labor flexibilization, import liberalization, devaluation of local currency and cuts in state-subsidy in social services continue to destroy Third World economies resulting in increased unemployment and underemployment (Lindio-McGovern 2007), the preconditions for the “circulation of labor” is created in the South. And if we come to think that the neoliberal policies of the IMF, the WTO, and the “transnational practices” of transnational corporations (Sklair 2002) that propel neoliberal globalization are largely controlled by Northern powers, then we see where the neoliberal hegemony is centered. However, although centered in the North, this neoliberal hegemony has developed multiple centers of power,
including the shaping of “neoliberal states” (Harvey 2007, Robinson 1996) in the South, creating semi-periphery hegemonies as well.

Another conceptual site to examine the gendered and classed nature of regional inequalities and in the North–South divide under globalization is the flow of sex trafficking in the sexual commodification of women. Bandana Purkayastha and Shweta Majumbar (Chapter 11 in this volume) argue that under globalization sex trafficking of women and girls has increased and Third World women’s vulnerability to it also increased due to their intensified poverty resulting from structural adjustment policies. The flow of sex trafficking is generally from the global south to the industrialized global north, but regional patterns are also discernible as hegemonies there have a hand on its process and organization. Purkayastha’s and Majumbar’s investigation of sex trafficking in South Asia show that India, which is becoming an “economic powerhouse” in the region, has become a major destination of trafficked women and girls from the poorer countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Purkayastha’s and Majumbar’s observation parallels a pattern in the European region. Women from within Europe whose countries had been more negatively affected by neoliberal and structural adjustment policies resulting in massive job displacement for women—such as Russia and Ukraine (countries in transition from socialist to market economy)—have become vulnerable to sex trafficking to other destination countries within Europe, such as France, Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands (Farr 2005).

Neoliberalism in Women in Development Thought/Discourse

In his “Globalization and Development Studies”, Philip McMichael (2005, 111) argues that globalization and development “are two sides of the same coin” and that, as “discursive concepts”, they have an ideological component. Neoliberalism as an economic project—anchored on an ideological base that is essentially within the capitalist mode of thought—seems more attune to the women in development (WID) mainstream perspective. WID became a dominant thought in the early 1970s emanating from Esther Boserup’s seminal work that located Third Women’s socially disadvantaged position from their not being integrated into development (Lindio-McGovern 1997; Chow 2002). Largely rooted in the modernization perspective and from the Western liberal feminist perspective, WID advocated for the integration of Third World women into economic development through institutional reforms, education, technology and income-generating activities. Since WID did not basically question the nature of capitalist development into which women were to be integrated, nor the technocratic, top-down premises of the modernization perspective among the North or Western countries, the neoliberal ideology easily and subtly inserted itself into the women in development (WID) discourse and its practice. This subtle insertion makes it appear that WID is empowering Third World women, and therefore requires a careful analysis of development projects espoused by international development
agencies that claim to empower women, while its embedded neoliberal ideology and practice may result in marginalizing many and even maintain or sharpen the class disparity among Third World women. Christobel Asiedu (Chapter 9 in this volume) provides a good example of a careful analysis of the how neoliberal system of thought embedded in a development program can result in an uneven impact of neoliberal globalization on women of different class status, while in subtle ways serve the expansion of transnational capital in the Third World, such as in Africa where she conducted her case study. Hence, just as neoliberal globalization interlocks into pre-existing structures of power and inequalities, it also interlocks itself into frames of thought that serve as basis for development policy and practice. But alternative perspectives or development frameworks emerge as well that may also have implications for change. So, in the latter part of the 1970s as a response to the limitations of WID, women and development perspective (WAD) called attention to how global capital accumulation exploited women even as they were integrated into it (Chow 2002). The emergence of WAD apparently coincided with the growth of export-processing zones that began to emerge in Third World countries where women predominated the labor-intensive transnational corporations’ global assembly lines, such as garment and electronics (Caraway 2007). Integration of women into global capital accumulation did not liberate most Third World women, especially peasant and working class women, from exploitation and poverty after all. Change for liberation of working class women implies transforming capitalist relations of production. Then in the 1980s, the gender and development (GAD) perspective came to prominence, which recognized the presence of patriarchy within class and across class and the oppression of women in both the reproductive and productive spheres. Viewing development as a complex process shaped by political, economic and social forces, it advocated a holistic approach that included all aspects of women’s lives for their empowerment (Chow 2002). It saw Third World women as agents of their own empowerment, not merely beneficiaries of development programs designed from above or by external agencies. DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) came about in 1984 as a response to the marginalization of Third World women’s experience in women in development (WID) thought and practice (Sen and Grown 1987; Moghadan 2005). A Third World women’s initiative, DAWN “affirmed that it is the experiences lived by poor women throughout the Third Word in their struggle to ensure the basic survival of their families and themselves that provide the clearest lens for an understanding of development processes” and advocated “alternative development processes that would give principal emphasis to the basic survival needs of the majority of the world’s people” (Sen and Grown 1987, 10, 9). Asiedu’s (Chapter 9 in this volume) proposal to empower women in sub-Saharan Africa—through the introduction of Information Communication Technologies (without viewing it as panacea) in ways that will be more responsive to the needs of the rural women most neglected in the development process—is a bottom-up approach, and within an integrated development model. It is aimed not only
at economic empowerment but also at the social and political empowerment of African women—a development perspective that falls within the GAD and DAWN approaches. Robert Dibie’s (Chapter 10 in this volume) comprehensive proposals for empowering women in Africa fall within the GAD perspective as well, as he pays attention to the African patriarchal culture and how it has shaped the economic, political and social development of Africa that has subordinated African women, and how that subordination is exacerbated under globalization. However, the general current state of women/gender and development discourse is faced with the challenge to evolve new critical analytical frameworks that can best capture the nuanced ways neoliberal ideology and practice re/configure into existing institutions and development programs of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in ways that may subtly preserve capital accumulation on a global scale rather than facilitate its radical transformation. Such a framework must critically question the argument that considers it a positive aspect of globalization when Third World women are turned into consumers of the products of multinational corporations, low-wage workers, or providers of cheap services, such as domestic work. Such critical frameworks are important as they may have implications for shaping resistance to neoliberalism through alternative development programs and policies that will truly empower Third World women. Such theoretical work would require more ethnographic studies and participation of Third World scholars who are often marginalized in mainstream academic discourses and theorizing about globalization.

Colonialism and Imperialism

Neoliberalism “has roots in the world-historical colonial project associated with the rise of capitalism” (McMichel 2005, 111). Others argue from the Marxist perspective that globalization is simply a new form of imperialism (Sklair 2002), and would prefer to use the term imperialism than the term globalization because it sort of mystifies its imperial project. Mainstreaming Third World women’s experiences in analysis and discussions of neoliberal globalization reduces colonialism and imperialism to seemingly neutral events and processes of globalization. Third World women whose nations had been colonial subjects embody in their experience of exploitation and oppression the gendered nature of the colonial project that was an instrument in the expansion of global capitalism. Anne Lacsamana, and Leigh Brownhill and Terisa E. Turner (Chapters 5 and 6 in this volume) bring back colonialism and imperialism into the discussion of and resistance to globalization. Lacsamana (Chapter 5) calls for a Filipina–American feminist thought and feminism that will address American imperialism that continue to affect the everyday lives of Filipinos both at home and abroad. A two-pronged feminist politics that links Filipina Americans to the anti-imperialist movement in the Philippines as they struggle to construct a non-subjugated identity in the U.S. are salient components of their agency. Such feminist politics must reclaim a
historical consciousness that their national identity carries a continuing struggle of the Filipino people for liberation from the continuing clutches of American imperialism, transnational capital, and militarism in the Philippines. The Philippine women’s movement itself had always articulated an oppositional stance and politics against imperialism and militarism towards national economic and political sovereignty as it traced its history of struggle from the anti-colonization revolutionary movement. Lacsamana calls attention to the intensification of human rights violations by the Philippine state in response to the growing organized resistance from various sectors of Philippine society to the neoliberal agenda that has increased rather than alleviated the economic pressures they have long suffered.

According to David Harvey (2005), imperialism operates on two logics or processes: “accumulation of capital” and “accumulation of power through dispossession”. Accumulation of power through colonialism dispossessed the colonized of their land and control of their labor. Control of land (including its resources) and labor was necessary for the accumulation of capital, transforming pre-colonial communal lands, production and subsistence farming. Accumulation of power through colonialism, however, had to be maintained by force. The gendered process of these two logics can be gleaned from examining the experience of Third World women. In Leigh Brown and Terisa Turner (Chapter 6 in this volume) we see the gendering of these two logics of imperialism in the experience of Kenyan women. Their continuing struggle for land through creative, militant land occupations (which is central to their being able to feed their families) and control of labor (which they lost under British imperialist–capitalist rule) is an eloquent resistance to this imperial logic that is re-articulated in the neoliberal agenda. The Kenyan’s women’s experience and resistance is paralleled by Filipino peasant women and men whose resistance to their landlessness—which began in the colonization period and intensified under neoliberal globalization—includes land occupations, attempts at control of agricultural labor, and promotion of an ideology of “land belongs to those who till it” (Lindio-McGovern 1997). Elizabeth Eviota (1992) in her The Political Economy of Gender: Women and the Sexual Division of Labor in the Philippines and Lindio-McGovern (1997) in her Filipino Peasant Women: Exploitation and Resistance provide an analysis of how the imperial logic of accumulation of capital through accumulation of power through dispossession is gendered through the experience of Filipino women. Therefore tracing the historical roots of neoliberal globalization makes visible the common ground of Third Women’s experience and the gendered, classed and raced nexus that links the Global North and the Global South.

Resisting Gendered, Classed and Raced Neoliberal Globalization

Transnational feminism that networks women across the world for global social justice can be a potent force for resistance and creating change to avert the destructive and dehumanizing nature of neoliberal globalization. The neoliberal project that
further frees the reins of global capitalism and its impact on Third World women suggests the need to contextualize the politics of an activist transnational feminism that would be more responsive to the needs of working class women, both waged and unwaged, and poor women. Martha Gimenez (Chapter 3 in this volume) suggests forging a working class women’s politics framed around and based on the location of working women in the relations of production and reproduction, as they are subject to the instability of the national and world economies. Brownhill and Turner (Chapter 6 in this volume) offer an analytical framework that expands the concept of “working class” to include the waged and unwaged since both are commoditized in the process of global capital expansion. Working class women’s transnational feminism, especially among Third World women, can strengthen the global resistance to neoliberal globalization that reinforce inequalities between men and women and among women.

Third World women’s transnational alliances, in some cases, go beyond the boundaries of class, however, as when they tackle environmental concerns (although environmental issues are not entirely devoid of class issues) or when they participate in the global resistance to imperial wars (Terisa Turner and Leigh Brownhill, Chapter 8 in this volume).

Third World neoliberal nation-states provide the micro-structures for the macro-structures of neoliberalism as embodied in the policies of WTO, IMF and the World Bank. Although it can be argued that the neoliberal state may be unstable and play contradictory roles (Havey 2007, Sassen 1998), the Third World nation state basically centralizes power in the implementation of the neoliberal agenda. Hence, Third World women’s resistance in this volume implicates their nation-states. This is best illustrated in the politics of Filipina migrant workers organized under Migrante International that targets the Philippine state in their struggle for migrants’ rights even though they are geographically outside of it since it is actively promoting labor export due to unemployment and debt crisis resulting from the implementation of structural adjustment and neoliberal development policies in the Philippines (Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, Chapter 4). The nation-state is still looked upon to guarantee migrants rights in their host societies. So do the migrant domestic workers in South Africa, from poorer neighboring states, who voiced their demands for protective legislations that would guarantee them equal labor rights as other workers in South Africa (Shireen Ally, Chapter 2).

As a target of resistance, the state must be transformed in order to accommodate women’s demands. This is exemplified in the Kenyan women’s collective efforts to work for constitutional reforms that would guarantee their demands for land and food security (Leigh Brown and Terisa Turner, Chapter 6), and in the Philippine women’s movement in alliance with other groups to engage in the political campaign for the resignation of the incumbent president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, on whose ruling political and military machinery is deemed accountable for the recent political killings of student, peasant, worker, clergy, media, women and youth activists (Anne Lacsamana, Chapter 5). The unseating of the incumbent president would be a way to move to a transition government that would pave the
formation of a democratic coalition government that would end militarization and work for an alternative system of governance and development that will promote the economic and social upliftment of the majority of the Filipino people and a sovereign nation.

The core corporate state allied with transnational capital is implicated as well, as Third World women challenge corporate greed that ravages the earth’s resources, creating an unsustainable future. This is demonstrated in the global action to keep oil on the ground, calling for a moratorium on oil drilling by Nigerian, Costa Rican, and Ecuadorian women, involving indigenous communities (Terisa Turner and Leigh Brownhill, Chapter 8). The women challenged core corporate states to play a more active role in assuming environmental responsibility and controlling the power of oil corporations, even as they try to undermine their corporate power through shut-downs, strikes and boycotts.

Taking the state as a target of resistance in their contentious politics for a more just and life-sustaining world, Third World women defy the neoliberal agenda of deregulation that increasingly deprives citizens of their right to a sovereign government that will serve their interest and needs, protect them from corporate abuse that commoditizes their labor, and corporate power that deprives them of equitable access to resources. Their state-oriented politics of resistance invites calling into question the argument that the state withers away in the process of neoliberal globalization. The state may play contradictory roles under pressures from competing interests, or play an instrumentalist role to transnational capital, or a protective, transformative role in response to militant, massive, intense pressure from civil society to create alternative social arrangements and institutional frameworks to neoliberal globalization. Some states indeed have assumed a transformative role to effect alternatives to neoliberalism, such as the case of Venezuelan government under the leadership of Hugo Chavez who have responded to the demands of the poor for control of resources (Terisa Turner and Leigh Brownhill, Chapter 8) and forming an alternative regionalism among states that want to take a different turn from the neoliberal path (Ann Ferguson, Chapter 7).

As neoliberal globalization impairs local Third World economies and human rights deteriorate as governments contain political activism, the promotion of inalienable economic and political rights becomes even more urgent. Economic rights—the right to have a decent employment free of exploitative and dehumanizing working conditions; the right to adequate access to basic resources of food, shelter, clean/potable water, and health care; the right to a sustainable environment; the right to land and other means necessary to sustain means of livelihood; the right to education—cannot be attained under the counter-insurgency of neoliberal regimes without protecting and promoting as well political rights—the right of people to organize collective action to bring about change, to engage in transformative action directed at the state, the right to a voice in policy making, the right to equal place in governance, the right to public assembly and the means to disseminate/access information to articulate their voice and stories. The social conditions Third World women face and the confrontation for change and resistance they are shaping
bring to urgency to broaden our conceptualization of rights to see the importance of intertwining political and economic rights, both in the process of change and in the content of change. Both are to be struggled for.

Proactive resistance to neoliberal globalization requires alternative values, antithetical to the values espoused by neoliberalism, that can shape alternative social arrangements, such as alternative economies. Neoliberalism promotes and is nourished by the culture and spirit of individualism, which is incompatible with the pursuit of social justice that presupposes social solidarity and the willingness to embrace that which would promote the common good (Harvey 2005). Embedded in the politics of Third World women’s resistance are alternative values that form the basis or foundation for the alternative institutional arrangements emanating from below. For instance, the “solidarity economy” that the Mexican women are shaping through the formation of a cooperative movement nurtures and articulates the values of community and collective sharing of resources, time, and labor while at the same time offers an alternative to corporate economy (Ann Ferguson, Chapter 7 in this volume). Their productive cooperatives create micro-structures of non-capitalist relations that serve as an alternative to petty capitalism that fertilizes the ground for global capital accumulation, and which at times may enrich petty capitalists through the cheap labor of poorer men and women and even children. Their trading cooperatives provide an alternative to the unequal free trade contained in NAFTA and other free trade regimes of globalization, such as the WTO (World Trade Organization), that extract resources from the Third World, taking away their sovereignty over their own resources. Solidarity economies from below need the support not only of non-governmental organizations, but also of the state if it wants to take a transformative role.

In his *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, David C. Korten (2006) talks about the need for “birthing” an “Earth Community” that would be oppositional to the values of Empire. “Empire” pursues hierarchical relationships based on domination and control, concentrates resources and material wealth to the ruling elite, honors the destructive power of violence and war, values masculine dominance, suppresses power of the many below and their great human potential for mature self-determination, courage, fearlessness and hope that can mobilize them for change. “Earth Community” on the other hand values, promotes, and sustains relationships that are non-hierarchical, gender balanced, cooperative partnerships/human connectedness, is protective of the rights of all, promotes democratic decision-making based on mutual responsibility and accountability, re-distribute power and resources to empower the powerless and improve the lives of all, and actualize human potentials. The cultural project of “Earth Community” favors communal stewardship of resources for the benefit of future generations. Its economic project affirms the right of every person to a means of livelihood, local control, self-reliance, and fair trade and sharing. Its political project affirms people’s right to participate in decision-making that affect their lives, promotes restorative justice that distributes power equitably for the benefit of the whole community. As Third World women form communities of struggle in their
collective response to the impact of neoliberal globalization, they are in the process of shaping the “birthing” of “Earth Community” that will be responsive to their own needs, and particular historically–culturally–politically produced economic, social conditions.

What More Needs to be Done?

A lot more needs to be done. On the epistemological level, more ethnographic studies that unearth thick description of Third World women’s resistance wherever they are needs to be done. In this process more exploration on how the principles of feminist research can be more explicitly utilized is called for. This volume suggests there is value in examining neoliberal globalization from the experience of “Third World women” who bear more the brunt of its negative impact because of their position and their nations’ position in the global political economy and gendered, raced, and classed systems it perpetuates. Cross-country studies inquiring areas not yet covered and other sectors of the economy need to be further investigated.

On the transformational activist level, certainly a lot more needs to be done. One area, as indicated in the transnational networks that the Third World women are already forging, is to explore the possibility of forming new regionalisms from below and inter-regional empowerment networks both from the grassroots level and the interstate level. This new regionalism and inter-regionalism will consist of alliances of organized groups of men and women who see the need to change the course of neoliberalism in their regions and organize dialogues to gather and analyse data of the experiences of grassroots men and women to identify commonalities and particularities of their experiences. Then raise these efforts on inter-regional level dialogues and networks to organize a global voice of resistance and alternatives to neoliberal globalization. The process and content of this new regionalism will be determined by the groups themselves. On the level of the states, government leaders who have some consciousness to avert the policies of neoliberal globalization can begin to form alliances that will strengthen their exchange of resources and alternative world views in forging alternative economies and trade relations. These initiatives that are already in limited ways incipient in Latin America can be strengthened and broadened to inter-regional alliances to include Asia, Africa, and the Middle-East.

What more needs to be done is daunting and certainly without difficulties and even risks. But the voices, experiences, and actions of Third World women documented and analyzed in this volume provide the insight and hope that change

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is possible, and that a more just, more equitable, more sustainable world is achievable.

**References**


