Introduction

After the tumultuous protests in 1999 directed at the World Trade Organization conference in Seattle, meetings of international financial institutions and leaders became the prime targets of people and groups opposed to their policies. Large demonstrations decrying globalization were organized across Europe. In 2001, groups critical of globalization gathered in Porto Alegre, Brazil, for the World Social Forum, which became an annual counterpoint to the elite World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland. Initially, the groups behind these and similar actions were described as the antiglobalization movement, and they signaled an important shift in both popular and scholarly views of globalization. The generally positive, at times even exuberant tone of discussions of globalization in the 1990s was swept aside by a global backlash. Globalization, the critics said, was hardly a panacea for the world's ills; it was in fact the main culprit behind many global problems. For groups engaged in this backlash, globalization has a particular meaning: it is primarily an economic force, emanating from the West, that imposes an unjust, unequal, and environmentally harmful capitalist system on the world to the detriment of local cultures and democratic self-control. This critical view has shaped subsequent global discourse about globalization. To some extent, globalization now is what its critics make of it.

The antiglobalization label turned out to be a poor fit, not least because many features of globalization – including world-spanning communication and transportation systems, the global monetary system, and world science and knowledge dissemination – are crucial to the movement, which itself is decidedly global. As the movement became more coherent and interconnected, the term "alternative globalization" began to displace the original label, reflecting a succinct phrase habitually invoked by the movements' members, "Another world is possible." The core problem was not globalization as such but the kind of globalization

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promoted by transnational corporations (TNCs), global finance, and elite capitalist classes. This form of globalization was the major source of inequality, exploitation, and oppression in the world, and only a determined global justice movement could begin to ameliorate capitalism's destructive and discriminatory consequences.

The alternative globalization and global justice movement encompasses many groups, from students protesting athletic apparel produced in sweatshops to peasants resisting transnational corporate control of their land and seeds; from indigenous groups defending their forest habitat to religious leaders seeking debt relief for developing countries; from labor unions concerned about the impact of free trade to feminists opposed to trafficking in young women. Transforming globalization can take many forms, and the alternative globalization movement is nothing if not diverse. This diversity reflects the fact that, for many people, "globalization" has become an all-purpose pejorative term. As a result, a wide range of problems are now routinely attributed to globalization and groups pursuing disparate goals increasingly unite behind the alternative globalization banner, making it difficult to articulate a widely supported alternative. But, as the readings in this part confirm, to describe the movement simply as resistance to, or an unthinking rejection of, globalization is to underestimate the global intent they share, which is to remake world society in accordance with principles that often conflict with established institutions.

At least some of those principles, such as equality and justice, derive from a long-standing socialist and social-democratic tradition of opposition to the harsh consequences of modernizing change – including efforts in many countries to reform, or humanize, capitalist development. In many ways, that tradition has been absorbed into the global backlash, which also includes radical nationalist and fundamentalist groups more commonly associated with the political right (whose complaints are, of course, quite different from those of groups on the left). Though the alternative globalization agenda is broader than that of older leftist movements, it has inspired such older groups and their successors to devote considerable resources to the effort. Thus, at the World Social Forum and the regional forums that it has spawned, participants include labor union leaders, peace groups, left-leaning politicians, and women's rights groups, alongside representatives of newer social movements, such as indigenous peoples, farmworkers, environmentalists, gay and lesbian rights advocates, and so on.

Not surprisingly, in light of the readings in Part VII, INGOs are especially prominent in the alternative globalization movement. Much critical energy is generated by these border-transcending voluntary associations that involve experts, activists, and dues-paying members. They attempt to focus public attention on global problems and build support for new policies to resolve them. Though capitalist globalization led by TNCs is a primary target, movement INGOs also aim their fire at states and IGOs. For example, the group Jubilee 2000, illustrated in a reading in Part IX, put pressure on developed countries to forgive the debts of developing countries; the French-based group ATTAC has advocated that countries impose the so-called "Tobin tax" on short-term capital movements across borders; the Seattle protesters in 1999 demanded new rules for international trade from the WTO; and the sweatshop apparel campaign has targeted the labor practices used by corporations such as Nike. These examples further indicate that the alternative globalization movement is hardly limited to rhetorical symbolic politics; its various component groups and supporters have also

proposed numerous specific policies. A common denominator in their proposals is the idea that global justice requires global governance, especially greater regulation of global economic activity.

Throughout this book, we have presented examples of scholars, activists, and organizations critical of globalization. For example, Joseph E. Stiglitz's opposition to "market fundamentalism" is a widely shared view. Amartya Sen's concern for a more equitable distribution of resources is a key goal for the overall movement as well. The readings in Part XI on the environment similarly express themes that resonate with alternative globalization activists. In this part, we offer selections that further illustrate the efforts to challenge and restructure globalization.

American sociologist Peter Evans offers a way to think about the resistance to globalization. Its critics challenge the notion that "neoliberal" globalization is a natural, generic process and oppose it by engaging in "counterhegemonic" globalization. He thinks of women's, labor, and environmental movements as three "families" within this joint global effort. The selection briefly illustrates how each tries to blend old themes with new strategies and to achieve global solidarity while holding on to local roots. Over all, Evans thinks the cultural and ideological impact of globalization critics is growing.

Belgian sociologist Geoffrey Pleyers follows with a more detailed history of the global justice movement. After "mobilizations against neoliberalism" in the 1990s, the movement became more organized around 2001, but its early ascendance gave way to what Pleyers calls a hesitant phase after 2005. A common critique of neoliberal economic ideology, and the failure of that ideology's proponents to address poverty and inequality, unifies the movement. In Pleyers's view, it focuses on three tendencies or alternative programs: new advocacy networks, local initiatives, and support for progressive regimes.

One of the best-known alternative globalization figures, Filipino author and activist Walden Bello, presents his views regarding the imperative of "deglobalization" in the next selection. In this interview, Bello sharply critiques the World Trade Organization for policies that he sees as highly detrimental to the "global South." The WTO, he says, is an undemocratic and opaque tool of American and other capitalist interests whose policies benefit only the developed countries. He calls for a decentralized global governance system in which grassroots groups and popular movements have a much larger voice and the "one-policy-fits-all" approach of the current system is abandoned in favor of a more flexible system that allows disadvantaged countries to adopt policies suited to their particular circumstances. He also offers some thoughts on how the alternative globalization movement could reconcile its internal conflicts, not least through the highly inclusive World Social Forum (below).

Vandana Shiva, a prominent Indian author and activist, speaks for many critics when she describes globalization as a normative and political process forced on the weak by the powerful. "Liberalizing" the world economy actually means enhancing state and corporate power. Globalization also leads to a kind of environmental apartheid, as the North relocates pollution-intensive and hazardous-waste industries in the South. But Shiva finds hope in "people's movements" for community rights and biodiversity. Subcomandante Marcos represents one such movement, the Zapatista rebel group in southern Mexico. Addressing a gathering of supporters, he

frames his group's struggle as "for humanity and against neoliberalism" – for "plural, different, inclusive" humanity, against the "brutal, universal, complete world war" of neoliberal globalization. He calls for a "network of voices" engaged in rebellion against global power.

One key node in that network of voices is the World Social Forum. An annual gathering of alternative globalization groups of many sorts, its speakers, lecturers, and workshops maintain a steady drumbeat of criticism of neoliberal globalization. The World Social Forum's initial "Call for Mobilisation" attacks "the hegemony of finance, the destruction of cultures, the monopolization of knowledge, mass media and communication, [and] the degradation of nature" brought about by contemporary capitalism. The Forum aims to energize a broad movement that works for global "equity, social justice, democracy and security for everyone" through "participative democratic experiences."[1]

Citing the main slogan of the alternative globalization movement, our final selection, by the International Forum on Globalization, seeks to show more specifically how "another world is possible." Rejecting unbridled liberalization and the commodification of the global commons, it envisions a new form of global economic democracy built on principles of subsidiarity, human rights, common heritage, diversity, and equity.

Note

1. World Social Forum, "Call for Mobilisation," March 2001, Porto Alegre, Brazil.