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### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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#### *Globalization and Women's Social Rights*

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The worldwide financial crisis has sparked a renewed interest in the complexities and contradictions of the neoliberal model of globalization, while growing unemployment and other hardships faced by working people raise questions about the viability of the global economy. The past three decades have seen the increasing involvement of women in the global economy, but there also has been a steady erosion of labor rights. This volume seeks to bring the notions of *social rights* and *economic citizenship* to the center of academic, policy, and political discussions, with a focus on the social and economic rights of women and the role that trade unions can play in their advancement.

Globalization, fortunately, is not a static force acting on people; it also has produced new social movements, transnational advocacy networks, and dynamic new forms of activism around the world. Labor unions, as well as a growing number of nongovernmental or civil society organizations, including numerous women's groups and transnational feminist networks, have criticized the economic policies and the international institutions that are behind the erosion of economic conditions and social rights. They are calling for a rights-based approach to development and growth, which would include social clauses guaranteeing that trade agreements will not undermine the rights of workers, women, or the environment.

## DEFINING SOCIAL RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC CITIZENSHIP

The framework for the definition and application of the rights of citizenship in a national context was elaborated by the late British sociologist T.H. Marshall (1964), who elucidated the origins and historical evolution of the civil, political, and social rights of citizens. Marshall explained that civil rights emerged and were codified in the 18th century (with its democratic revolutions); that the 19th century saw the extension of political rights (at least for the male population); and that the 20th century saw the adoption of social rights with the rise of politicized labor movements and the welfare state. Civil rights were rights over the body, including the right to move freely and to seek work at an occupation of one's choice. Political rights pertained to independent organizing and participation in electoral processes. Social rights were those connected to education, training, a decent standard of living, and good work conditions. There are gaps in the framework, even for the history of the industrialized countries that Marshall described. Black men in America, for example, were unable to exercise their civil or political rights in Southern states until well into the second half of the 20th century. Women did not receive many of the civil and political rights—notably the rights pertaining to residence, choice of occupation, nationality, and the vote—until the early 20th century (e.g., England and the United States) or even the mid-20th century (France and Switzerland). What is more, feminists have identified reproductive rights and choice as a key civil right for women, and these were not codified until well into the second half of the 20th century (Lister, 1997; Misra & King, 2005; Moghadam, 2006). Other scholars have noted that the development of the welfare state—and therefore of the social rights of citizens, or their economic citizenship—varies across liberal capitalist democracies (e.g., the United States and Switzerland), social democracies (the Nordic countries), and corporate social democracies (most of continental Europe). Social rights refer to the gains made by labor movements in the early part of the 20th century and their codification in the labor laws and social policies of welfare states, particularly around health, education, vocational training, and social insurance. Social rights and economic citizenship are most advanced in the Nordic countries (Esping-Anderson, 1990; Janoski, 1998). A summary of civil, political, and social rights of citizenship as per Marshall, with some minor adjustments, is presented in Table 1.1.

During the Cold War, civil and political rights tended to be emphasized by the United States and its capitalist allies, whereas the rights of citizens to full social and economic rights (including the rights of ethnic groups and nationalities) were stressed by the Soviet Union and its socialist allies. This was so despite the references to civil, political, *and* social rights in the

Table 1.1. Summary of Civil, Political, and Social Rights of Citizenship

<i>Civil Rights</i>	<i>Political Rights</i>	<i>Social Rights</i>
Right to contract	Right to vote	Health services
Equal treatment under the law	Right to run & hold office	Family allowances
Freedom of expression	To form or join a political party or trade union	Primary and secondary education
Freedom of religion	To engage in fund-raising	Higher education
Right to privacy	Nationality rights	Vocational education
Control over one's body	Refugee and contract worker rights	Social insurance
Choice of residence		Compensatory rights
Choice of occupation	Minority rights	
	Dissident rights	

Source: Moghadam (2003), adopted from Janoski (1998) and Marshall (1964).

1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations, therefore, agreed on two new covenants, both issued in 1966: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The latter remains the central framework for social and economic rights as these are known internationally. The ICESCR prescribes the right of people to a freely chosen job; equitable and equal wages for work of equal value; dignified working conditions for workers and their families; professional training; equal opportunities for promotion; protection for families, especially for children; maternity protection; protection of boys, girls, and teenagers against economic exploitation. These are consistent with the standards and norms promoted by the International Labor Organization (ILO). Throughout the 20th century, the ILO—through its tripartite arrangement of meetings and agreements among governments, employers, and trade unions—issued a large number of conventions, declarations, and recommendations pertaining to the rights of workers. Not all have been adopted by states, and even where they have been adopted the norms or policies are not always enforced. States have, however, agreed on four core labor standards represented by eight conventions, which call for freedom of association and the prohibition of child labor, forced labor, and discrimination in employment.<sup>1</sup> Important as the core labor standards are, they represent but a segment of the broader array of social and economic rights that citizens should enjoy.

As understood today by academics, trade unionists, and feminist activists, “social and economic rights” generally include decent work and decent wages, independent unions and other associations, worker education and the capacity to move up the occupational ladder, social security, the

absence of ethnic or gender discrimination, a healthy work environment free of sexual harassment, and work–family balance. We would add that in the 21st century, rights for migrant workers, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender workers, inclusion of domestic workers in the provisions of labor law, workplace democracy, and recognition of the value of the care economy also should be understood as social and economic rights.<sup>2</sup> What is more, the era of globalization calls for global social policy, such as recent calls for a “global social floor” to end poverty and provide social protection for all (van Ginneken, 2009).

There is no single instrument spelling out the social and economic rights of women, although such rights are referred to in the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the *Charter of Women Workers Rights* of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU),<sup>3</sup> and the ILO conventions pertaining to maternity protection, nondiscrimination, and equal remuneration.<sup>4</sup> We note, too, that women’s social and economic rights—including labor rights—are typically inscribed in national labor laws and in some constitutions. Across the globe, the content of such laws, and the social rights that citizens enjoy, vary. In many countries, women workers enjoy rights to paid maternity leave, crèches at the workplace with nursing breaks to feed their babies, subsidized child-care facilities in the community, and retirement that is several years earlier than that of men. (The latter is to compensate for their double duty as workers and mothers.) Women also may be the beneficiaries of laws against discrimination in employment and pay, and against sexual harassment.

Therefore, there are good reasons why special attention should be devoted to women’s economic participation and rights. First, the current era of neoliberal globalization is characterized by the feminization of labor; the feminization of poverty; the huge numbers of migrant women working as nannies or domestics; the growth in the trafficking of women; and women’s continued responsibility for child care, housework, and elder care. Second, the work that women do spans both the productive and reproductive spheres, or the market economy and the care economy. Third, the vulnerabilities inherent in global capitalism affect women disproportionately, whether in their productive or reproductive roles.

#### Implications of Globalization for Women’s Social Rights and Economic Citizenship

Economic globalization and its correlate, trade liberalization, offer women opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship, but there are risks and social costs as well. There is little consensus among researchers about the

short- and long-term impacts of liberalization. In the mid-1990s, development economist Paul Streeten (1997) delineated the costs and benefits of globalization. His “balance sheet” is reproduced in Table 1.2, and it is remarkable for its prescient insights. The UN Development Agency’s Human Development Office subsequently produced a report on globalization that presented it as “janus-faced,” that is, capable of creating both winners and losers (UNDP, 1999).

One may question whether Streeten was correct in suggesting that economic globalization would be a uniformly negative experience for women. Women with higher education, mobility, and cross-cultural skills have been able to benefit from the employment opportunities of economic globalization and the imperatives of the “knowledge economy.” And certain segments of the female population across the globe have been able to take advantage of privatization and the encouragement of small business development to

Table 1.2. Balance Sheet of Globalization

<i>Good for:</i>	<i>Bad for:</i>
Japan, Europe, North America	Many developing countries
East and Southeast Asia	Africa and Latin America
Output	Employment
People with assets	People without assets
Profits	Wages
People with high skills	People with few skills
The educated	The uneducated
Professional, managerial, and technical people	Workers
Flexible adjusters	Rigid adjusters
Creditors	Debtors
Those independent of public services	Those dependent on public services
Large firms	Small firms
Men	Women, children
The strong, risk takers	The weak and vulnerable
Global markets	Local communities
Sellers of technically sophisticated products	Sellers of primary and standard manufactured products
Global culture	Local cultures
Global peace	Local troubles (Russia, Mexico, Turkey, former Yugoslavia)

Source: Streeten (1997).

obtain credits and loans to start their own businesses. Nonetheless, the environment in which even middle-class women work—that is, the environment of neoliberal economic globalization—is neither women-friendly nor conducive to social and economic rights. Many critics feel that the current neoliberal trade agenda does little to advance economies, let alone social groups such as workers and women. Activists in the global justice movement—including transnational feminist networks such as the Women’s International Coalition for Economic Justice (WICEJ), the International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN), Women in Development Europe (WIDE) and the Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)—argue that the new trade agenda benefits the big corporations and rich countries, squeezing out small producers and wage earners (see Moghadam 2005). Even policymakers who are committed to a liberalized trade regime disagree on trade rules and their implications for different countries and different sectors of their economies. To satisfy their own populations, including powerful unions, the countries of the North continue to protect certain of their products or enter into bilateral trade agreements with specific terms. The countries of the South are determined to enter the rich country markets, but to do so they must open up their own markets to competition. The evidence on the impact of trade liberalization thus far is mixed for developing countries, according to economist Lance Taylor. His long-term study of 14 countries undergoing liberalization found mixed results, with four countries in his study reporting increased “informality” of employment. Given the evidence, Taylor (2004) expresses “amazement at the continued insistence on the part of proponents of orthodox neoclassical theory, whereby increased integration of world commodity and capital markets is conducive to growth and is expected to be welfare-improving” (p. 29). His skepticism was entirely warranted, for the global financial crisis and economic recession of 2008–2009 put into sharp relief the deficits of a global financial and trading system that resulted in stock market collapses and the rising cost of food and fuel in developing countries.

China—currently the world’s factory—usually is cited as an example of a successfully liberalized economy that has benefited enormously from massive amounts of foreign direct investment. Certainly it has enormous reserves of educated workers ready to serve in the countless factories that have been set up to produce and export goods. India—with its huge reserves of educated, English-speaking middle-class workers—has become a major site of offshore services (teleservices) by credit card companies, airlines, banks, and other service providers. In both countries, however, although some workers and some producers have clearly benefited from liberalization, poverty and inequalities remain massive. The Chinese workforce experiences significant exploitation and extremely hazardous work conditions. Both economies have

seen growth and wage increases, but social exclusion and relative poverty have grown, too, and there are many concerns about environmental degradation (UNDP, 2005). Not surprising is the recent upsurge in Chinese labor activism (Chen, 2006; Lee, 2007; Ngai, 2005).

Much research on free-trade agreements (FTAs) indicates that they often stimulate new jobs that are without benefits or stability, encourage urban development without environmental regulations, and hurt women workers and the poor (WIDE, 2007). As transnational corporations expand their operations, low-wage workers may initially enjoy more choices in employment, but ultimately they find fewer opportunities as traditional income sources and local businesses give way to a small set of transnational investments. Meanwhile, women generally continue to receive lower wages than men for the same work, and a low-wage female labor force often becomes the preferred employee (Henrici, 2005; WIDE, 1998). Compounding that vulnerability, women in low-income or irregular employment, or women who lack substantial financial assets or have no say in trade unions play no role in responding to, much less shaping, any FTA. The combination of flexible labor markets, trade agreements under neoliberal conditions, and traditional gender ideology works to the disadvantage of most women in the labor force. What is more, the global economic crisis of 2008–2009 exacerbated unemployment and threatened to sideline labor rights or social and economic rights even further.

A counterweight to this state of affairs would appear to lie with social movements and civil society organizations, notably trade unions and women's organizations. Unions have protested the negative effects of economic globalization, and many of the more progressive ones have engaged in efforts to enhance women workers' social/economic rights through movement activism and the adoption or enforcement of pro-worker legislation. Women have made impressive inroads into trade union decision making in a number of countries and regions around the world (e.g., Latin America, the Caribbean, the Philippines, Australia, Canada, Scandinavia) and they have the support of global union federations as well as national-level peak bodies. In general, reflecting a still sex-segregated labor market, trade unions representing feminized sectors (e.g., health, education, social welfare, and to a certain degree, civil service) tend to have strong female involvement in decision making. The global union federations are setting the standard by instituting mechanisms to ensure the representation of female trade unionists on decision-making bodies. And they are urging trade union affiliates to organize more women workers, elect more women to decision-making positions, and take up issues such as sexual harassment and other issues that enhance the social rights and economic citizenship of working women. (See especially chapters by Olney and Wintour, this volume.)

We propose that the trade union movement, a traditional institution of political activism, provides valuable sites for meaningful challenges to globalization. It is useful on two counts. First, by virtue of its characteristics of solidarity and universality, it has the capacity to challenge the political and cultural economy of globalization, including women's work. Second, trade unions are a potentially important resource for feminist politics because women have made some gains within the trade union movement. In particular, coalitions between trade unions and women's organizations at the national level, along with coalitions between global union federations and transnational feminist networks, could help advance women's social and economic conditions, participation, and rights. It is here, too, at the nexus of the women's movement and the labor movement, that *difficult dialogues* have taken place or could do so, on such issues as sexual and reproductive health and rights, immigration, environmental protection, and social clauses.

This book has two objectives. First, it seeks to examine the role of international law and human rights instruments in the protection and expansion of women's social and economic rights, and how these laws affect legal frameworks, policies, and advocacy campaigns at the national level. Second, it seeks to examine the part played by trade union feminists in (a) bridging the divide between the labor movement and the women's movement, and (b) promoting policies to enhance the working conditions and social/economic rights of women in the labor force. Key questions are:

- Do existing legal frameworks and instruments adequately protect working women? Is there adequate knowledge of these instruments?
- Can social/economic rights be enhanced through a strategy to increase women's participation in trade union decision making? How are trade union feminists addressing the erosion of working women's conditions and rights? What are unions doing to increase women's leadership? What are the obstacles and successes?
- Are feminist organizations and trade unions working together to enhance social and economic rights? Are trade union feminists the bridge between the women's movement and the labor movement?

Through an analysis of economic conditions facing women across countries, an examination of labor codes, social policies, and international rights instruments, and reports on trade union activities with respect to gender and social equality, the book elucidates the gaps in legislation and failures of state policy, the extent of nongovernmental organization (NGO)–trade union collaboration, and the capacity of trade union feminists to influence the



culture, priorities, and partnerships of their unions. Conceptually, the book draws on and contributes to social movement and world-systems theories, as well as to gender studies and globalization studies. The chapter authors provide theoretical framing, showing how feminist and labor theorizing conceptualizes labor rights and women's social/economic rights in legislation as well as in labor movement policies, campaigns, and resources. At the same time, the uneven application and enforcement of these measures validate world-system theory's focus on global inequalities and hierarchies across the countries of the core, periphery, and semiperiphery; and suggest the different political opportunities available to activists attempting to build social movement organizations and enhance participation and rights across the world system. We draw on and contribute to the literatures on transnational processes, including international advocacy and transnational feminist politics and practices in an era of globalization.

#### UNION FEMINISM

Union feminists are playing an important role in challenging the sexual politics of unions and in mobilizing women's participation in transnational campaigns for labor rights and economic justice. Our research suggests that union feminists, with their structural ties to both organized labor and the women's movement, are in a unique position to mobilize within both movements in response to the issues and concerns that rapid economic globalization raises for all workers. Because union renewal depends on developing new ideas and resources for organizing new types of workers and new types of workplaces, it is important for unions to create a central place for the participation of union feminists in their organizations, campaigns, and struggles.<sup>5</sup>

We view union feminism as goal-oriented collective action taken on behalf of the rights of women as a group. Union feminism emerges out of the day-to-day struggles by women for equality, respect, and dignity at home, in the workplace, in their unions, and in society as a whole. Union feminists use discursive tools (such as conference resolutions, policy statements, educational programs, Websites, and newsletters), as well as institutionally sanctioned spaces (including conventions, workshops, labor schools, and committee structures) to fashion a network of resources that can be called into action to mobilize union members and their potential supporters at strategically important moments. This network helps to establish and sustain more permanent structures of organizational participation and a collective identity based on the belief that social and political action taken by a group can make a difference (Fonow, 2004).

As a political environment, globalization has reconfigured the opportunities for politics and the repertoire for collective actions available to social

movements (Moghadam, 2005; 2009). For example, emerging new political opportunity structures such as transnational labor advocacy networks provide union women with the opportunity to participate in the ongoing construction of transnational labor solidarity. Networks can serve both as actors in politics and as a way to mobilize and structure the actions of participants. However, the existence of networks in and of themselves does not produce collective action; networks have to be framed by movements as useful circuits for mobilization.

Unions have always been involved in international labor networks, but more recently their networks have become thicker and more diverse. There has been a proliferation of political spaces where the interests of labor overlap with other movements and with advocacy organizations concerned about labor rights and development. Increasingly campaigns for labor rights are organized and funded with nonunion support from churches, foundations, NGOs, and universities. Labor conferences and periodicals focus more on noncontract issues such as worker empowerment, organizing, union democracy, and feminism. Contract issues are being defined in new ways, and many unions are actively engaged in equity bargaining (Kidder, 2000). New players from the nonprofit sector and activists from other social movements are joining with unions as strategic partners in the growing transnational advocacy network for labor rights.

These collaborations help to expand traditional ideas about the roles that unions can play in the movement for global justice. Transnational labor advocacy networks have become mobilizing structures for feminists and labor activists and have opened the way for union feminists to play an active role in shaping the discourses and mobilizing strategies of organized labor. Within these networks union feminists challenge at least two conventional notions. The first challenge is to the class-based solidarity of the labor movement, by acknowledging the differences of gender, race, sexuality, and ethnicity within class. The second challenge is the gender-based solidarity of the women's movement, by recognizing the class and ethnic differences among women. The formation and articulation of gender-specific class-based political demands change the boundaries of those included and excluded in the process of social movement formation, thus creating new types of political claims and new solidarities—what Curtin (1999) labels contingent solidarities. As a tool of analysis, the concept of contingent solidarities provides a framework for identifying how and why women have defined their political interests within particular political fields. This concept “allows for a cross-national analysis of the ways in which class, welfare state, labor markets and cultural discourse have included or excluded women and how women trade unionists themselves have influenced the construction and formulation of claims, strategies and solidarities” (Curtin, 1999, p. 60). In the case of

union feminists, these contingent solidarities are mediated through activist and advocacy networks.

Those concerned with the renewal of the labor movement must come to terms with the fundamental way that gender structures neoliberal globalization, labor markets, and FTAs. We argue for feminist analysis of gender because sexual politics is integral to trade unions, globalization, and efforts to challenge the neoliberal agenda. The labor movement already has within its ranks a group that can significantly aid the necessary renewal—union feminists (Ledwith, 2006). Union feminists already active within the network of global union federations are situated to understand the tensions and contradictions between productive and social reproductive spheres, the sexual politics of trade unions, and the importance of building transnational solidarities contingent on an understanding of cultural and social differences among workers (Franzway, 2001).

Union feminists weave together strengths and strategies that emerge from the labor movement and the women's movements. By building and mobilizing transnational networks and alliances between these various movements, union feminists create political spaces for new workers and for a new understanding of workers' issues and concerns that arise out of the rapidly changing impact of globalization on both workplaces and intimate lives.<sup>6</sup> However, for labor to benefit from the work of union feminists they must increase and enhance the participation of women within their ranks. This requires a rethinking of structures and practices that perpetuate male dominance in the labor movement.

#### BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATION

This project was initiated in San Francisco in August 2004, during the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association (ASA). Mary Margaret Fonow and Suzanne Franzway presented a paper on women and trade unions at a panel on transnational social movements organized by Val Moghadam. We met after the panel to discuss a collaborative project on women, unions, and economic citizenship. Subsequently, Franzway and Fonow began work on a book manuscript on feminist trade unionism, while Moghadam and a research assistant at UNESCO examined international legal instruments and conducted interviews with trade unionists in France and at the ICFTU and ETUF in Brussels, Belgium. Moghadam organized a roundtable on *Women, Socio-economic Rights and Trade Union Leadership* that took place on July 12, 2006, during the second World Forum on Human Rights, in Nantes, France.<sup>7</sup>

The three co-editors met again, for a panel on feminism and the labor movement at the ASA conference in August 2006; the papers in this book

by Linda Briskin and Jennifer Curtin were initially conceived as papers for that panel. In July 2008, Moghadam presented her research on globalization and women's social rights in the Maghreb, at a conference in Cairo, Egypt, organized by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Conference on *Labor, Economic Crisis and the Future of Social Policy in the Arab Countries*). In September 2008, Fonow and Franzway participated in the *Labouring Feminism 2* conference in Stockholm, Sweden where they presented their research on queer labor organizing; this is work that grew out of Fonow's participation in the conference, *Toward a Vision of Sexual and Economic Justice*, held at Barnard College, in the United States, in 2007.<sup>8</sup> And in July 2010, the research network and book project were discussed at the World Congress of Sociology, in Gothenburg, Sweden.

We bring together here the work of feminist scholars, labor activists, and women leaders from labor unions to discuss women's activism and leadership for social and economic rights across a wide range of occupations, unions, and labor market sectors. The case studies here represent a variety of regions throughout the world including Asia, Europe, North America, South America, Middle East, Africa, and Australia. Illustrations and examples are drawn from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, South Africa, Argentina, France, Ecuador, Ukraine, Laos, New Zealand, Israel, Japan, Canada, Australia, Britain, and the United States.

The authors in Part I—Women, Work, and Social/Economic Rights Across the Globe—provide frameworks and empirical findings for understanding how globalization has affected women's opportunities to find decent work and how globalization provides a context for understanding women's collective action and claims and for economic citizenship and social rights. Each explores the contradictions of globalization and the gaps between equity/labor laws and policies and the reality of women's economic lives on the ground. Each chapter emphasizes different paths to economic citizenship for women but also focuses on how social movements and activists with similar goals are coming together in the struggle for women's economic and social rights.

In the first chapter, "Toward Economic Citizenship: The Middle East and North Africa," Valentine M. Moghadam draws attention to the limitations of women's economic citizenship in countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which emanate from both neoliberal globalization and Muslim Family Law. In particular, she shows how the absence of a key civil right—women's right to mobility and to an occupation of their choice—constrains women's economic citizenship and reinforces economic dependence on male kin. Examining the paradoxes of globalization, she uncovers the opportunities that globalization presents for women's collective

action and documents how women's rights organizations in the MENA countries are making claims for social rights with varying levels of success.

In "Promoting the Social Rights of Working Women: The Case of Palestinian Women in Israel," Michal Schwartz continues the analysis of women's social and economic rights in the Middle East, with a focus on Arab women citizens of Israel. She argues that their low rate of labor-force participation is an indicator of their low economic and social status and, in turn, helps to reproduce it. She provides a comparative analysis of the status of Jewish and Palestinian women and demonstrates the wide gap between them on most every indicator of progress—a gap she attributes to institutional forms of discrimination against Palestinians. For Schwartz, the right to work outside the home and to organize and unionize is vitally important in the struggle for equality between the two ethnic groups as well as between the sexes. Her case study describes how the Workers' Advice Center—in the absence of effective organizing by Israel's main union, the Histadrut—advocates for Palestinian women employed in agriculture, a sector where they face stiff competition from imported workers.

In "Tunisia: Women's Economic Citizenship and Trade Union Participation," Hafidha Chékir and Khédija Arfaoui explore the contradictions and loopholes in the human rights conventions and labor laws as they apply to women in Tunisia, and point to the limitations of trade union action with respect to working women. Notwithstanding the importance of legislation passed in 2004 against sexual harassment—a key element in women's economic citizenship in Tunisia as elsewhere—women find it difficult to bring forth charges of workplace harassment for fear of job loss. And although the government of Tunisia officially championed women's rights, its adoption of the neoliberal model undermined gender and social equity alike. This reality helped motivate the protests of early 2011, which led to the government's collapse. Chékir and Arfaoui explore the gap between equity law and reality on the ground and explore the obstacles that will need to be removed before women play a role in union decision making.

Next, in the chapter by Graciela Di Marco, "Gendered Economic Rights and Trade Unionism: The Case of Argentina," attention is drawn to the struggle for social rights within the context of a history of political repression, the rise of neoliberalism and the emergence of new types of social movements. In one of her case studies Di Marco focuses on the role of women in the Congress of Argentine Workers (CTA), a new type of social movement organization founded on the principles of direct membership, participatory democracy, and political autonomy. In 2000, the CTA created a Secretariat for Gender Equality with female quotas for executive leadership and outreach to feminist organizations that has resulted in adoption of

more radical feminist goals. Di Marco contends that the struggle to protect and fulfill women's economic and social rights will need the cooperation of many political actors, including trade unions, social movements, and women's movements.

In the final chapter in the section, "Can a Focus on Survival and Health as Social/Economic Rights Help Some of the World's Most Imperiled Women in a Globalized World? Cases from Ecuador, Ukraine, and Laos," Rae Lesser Blumberg and Andres Salazar-Paredes focus on the struggles for social rights and economic justice for women in Ecuador, Ukraine, and Laos. Each case presents a different set of challenges and different opportunities for activism. They confront head on the major paradox of globalization; is the income provided by precarious work worth the risk to health, safety, and survival? To answer that question they turn to the experiences of women in Ecuador who work in the nontraditional agriculture sector of export flowers and broccoli, to women in Laos who work as bar hostesses, and to women in the Ukraine who are compelled to migrate abroad to find work and who may become trapped in sexual slavery. To counter the ill effects, they recommend unionization, exporting more to countries with higher health and safety standards for their products (green label), leveraging various ILO conventions and standards, criminalizing the traffic in people but professionalizing jobs that service the tourist industry, supporting NGOs that work to reintegrate women who were forced into the sex trade back into society, and protecting workers' health from pesticides and from sexually transmitted diseases.

Part II—Reports From the Field: Trade Union and Multilateral Perspectives—offers trade union and multilateral perspectives that were initially presented at the second World Forum on Human Rights held in Nantes, France in 2006. Each report examines the status of women and equity mechanisms within federated labor organizations designed to provide national labor unions the opportunity to connect with multilateral agencies that represent the interests of workers across national boundaries. Nora Wintour of Public Services International (PSI) and Jo Morris of Britain's Trade Union Congress (TUC) noted that women were now 40% to 50% of union workers but still had a way to go before becoming at least 30% of the decision makers and leaders in the trade unions. The women's committees of each federation are networked through the coordinating activities of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which in 2003 initiated a major campaign to increase significantly women's membership in unions worldwide and their representation and participation in union programs, activities, and decision-making structures.

The ILO is the oldest of the UN agencies and a tripartite organization bringing together governments, employers, and trade unions. For some years, the ILO has been encouraging increased female participation within the

delegations who meet annually in Geneva. Between 2000 and 2006, according to Shauna Olney in “The ILO, Gender Equality, and Trade Unions,” there was a slight increase in the number of government and employer female participants—from 26% to 30.5% for governments, and from 15% to 19.7% for employers. However, the number of female participants from workers’ organizations decreased during the same period—from 19.5% to 17.2%. Clearly, the trade unions, especially those from the developing world, need to be more gender aware and inclusive.

PSI represents unions and workers in the fields of health, education, and public utilities. In the 1990s, on most decision-making bodies, women made up only 20% to 30% and PSI’s senior officers were all male. In 2002, PSI amended its Constitution to allow for gender parity on all decision-making bodies and to elect co-chairs for all committees, one man and one woman. Overnight, as Wintour explains, the proportion of women on the highest decision-making body, the Executive Board, jumped from 22% to 50%. However, the situation in the affiliates had not yet followed this model: Men remained the vast majority (about 85%) of presidents and general secretaries of PSI affiliates.

What about women and decision making in country-level “peak bodies” (union federations)? As a committed trade unionist, Jo Morris defends the historical record of the British labor movement in the struggle for social equality and welfare while also recognizing shortcomings in gender equality and leadership. In Britain’s TUC, women’s union density is about the same as men’s, and women are more likely than men to join unions, but their share of decision-making positions remains disproportionately small. The low number of women represented on the union’s main decision-making body, the National Executive Committee (NEC), has been an important issue for those campaigning for equality. Representation has in some cases been improved by the introduction of reserved seats. In most cases, women’s representation on the NEC is proportional to the overall female union membership of the TUC-affiliated union.

In the final chapter, “The Role of Unions in the Promotion of Gender Equality in France,” trade unionist Pascale Coton provides a brief historical overview of women’s participation in French unions and in French labor markets. Coton argues that unions are a reflection of the larger society and as such they recreate, reflect and interrogate gender perspectives within and outside of their structures. Efforts to integrate women into the Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC) have an uneven past with no real improvement occurring until the 1980s when unions experienced a decline in numbers and became aware of the need to build new structures in order to attract new members. This coincided with a large increase in the number of women entering the workforce and feminists seized this moment

as an opportunity to build alliances with labor to promote women's social rights and to advocate for the equality of women within unions. Coton describes a CFTC initiative to improve gender equality and work–family balance, and she points to international resources that can be leveraged in the pursuit of gender justice and social rights.

The book's third and final section asks, *Where Next for Feminism and the Labor Movement?* Linda Briskin's chapter, "Trade Unions, Collective Agency, and the Struggle for Women's Equality: Expanding the Political Empowerment Measure," argues that trade unions are well situated as vehicles for women's equality, especially in the current global context. The chapter demonstrates that trade unions have the potential to improve workplace conditions and relations at multiple levels and geographies, that is, at local, regional, national, and transnational levels as indicated by a range of quantitative as well as qualitative measures. These include macro indicators such as union density, and institutional indicators such as programs to ensure equality representation; structures of representation such as women's committees and other constituency structures; and the codification of equality in union charters. Briskin poses the question: to what extent is collective bargaining an equality vehicle? As vehicles for the collective agency of women and other marginalized groups, trade unions are central to transnational campaigns for social and economic rights.

The argument that union women's organizing has contributed to the recognition of gender politics parallels the argument by Franzway and Fonow in Chapter 14 on the emergence of queer organizing in trade union movements. However, unions remain undertheorized and underrated as instruments towards these ends. In taking issue with the persistent and often ungrounded views of unions as unreconstructed patriarchal institutions (and echoing the arguments of Jo Morris and Nora Wintour), Briskin shows that union women, and other equality-seeking groups, have had an enormous impact on the practices, policies, and discourse of unions in many Western countries, and to some extent in unions of the South. They also are well situated to promote women's social rights and economic citizenship.

Drawing on her fieldwork conducted in Japan since 2003, Kaye Broadbent in "Women-only Unions and Women Union Leaders in Japan," investigates the possibilities of Japan's women-only unions, and argues for both their necessity and their potential. The chapter traces the 20th-century history of Japanese unions in the context of the Japanese labor market. This reveals the discrimination women face in the workforce and the reluctance of mainstream unions (enterprise unions) to address women's inequality, workplace harassment, or sexism. Broadbent builds on Briskin's analysis of women's organizing and the differences between women-only unions and predominantly female-dominated workers centers such as Domestic Workers



United in the United States. Japanese women-only unions were formed as a strategy aimed at achieving equality by addressing these issues.

These women-only unions differ from mainstream unions not only in terms of their focus on women, but more specifically in their focus on workers outside the boundaries of the large enterprise as well as nonregular workers. The chapter presents a case study of the formation and impact of Japan's largest women-only union, Josei Union. Although the membership is small, the union has won the right to collective bargaining, which has given it more legal power than the nongovernment or nonprofit labor organizations that are on the increase in Japan. It is this legal power that has allowed Josei Union to pursue cases involving discrimination in employment conditions. The union has also managed to establish international networks with external women's organizations and labor movements. Like Briskin, Broadbent underlines the value of democratic organization as essential to achieving social/economic rights for working women, and points to centers and associations for working women as having the potential to work with the trade unions to address women's economic conditions and rights. But she also warns that care is needed since alliances with broad based women's organizations could draw the orientation away from the working class.

Neva Seidman Makgetla's chapter, *Women's Leadership in the South African Labor Movement*, provides a telling analysis of the kinds of contradictions that women experience in attempting to make trade unions work for women's social/economic rights. South Africa has constitutional and discursive commitments to gender equity, but patriarchal relations continue to subordinate women in the home and at work. Based on her own fieldwork as well as national surveys, Seidman Makgetla analyses the very limited gains that women have made in trade union leadership. In contrast to Briskin and Broadbent, she queries the value of democratic processes since leadership elections do not appear to benefit women. But she goes on to show why this was the case in South African unions.

Although women make up almost half of total union membership in South Africa, they occupy less than one-fourth of the leadership positions, most of which are the low-status positions of deputy president or treasurer. Seidman Makgetla addresses possible factors, starting with the social reality that women have little formal power in the rest of South African society. Black women faced extraordinary levels of unemployment, and if they had a job they generally remained in subordinate positions and low-wage jobs. They were largely excluded from the traditional strongholds of South African unionism in heavy industry and the mines.

Overall, the limiting conditions are familiar to union women and researchers and include responsibility for household labor, occupational

segregation in a few industries, and socialization. But Black South African women experienced an additional burden imposed by apartheid policies, and their legacy, which confined them to their homes while the men worked elsewhere. Women's capacity to participate in trade unions is further undermined by indifferent or hostile male union leadership and inadequate union structures. Attempts at self-organizing through women-specific structures were eroded by their weak structural location, lack of resources, and resistance by the male leadership. Seidman Makgetla provides a valuable case study that shows clearly that overcoming resistance by men leaders is an important element in gaining rights for women workers, and that the situation is exacerbated by the weak position of the labor movement in society.

In their chapter, "Demanding Their Rights: LGBT Transnational Labor Activism," Suzanne Franzway and Mary Margaret Fonow extend the ambit of social and economic rights by investigating how labor movement networks are being mobilized for the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers, and they consider the goals, discourses, strategies, and tactics of queer labor organizing at national and transnational levels. A renewed notion of sexual politics (following the tradition of Kate Millet) provides the basis for an analysis because it incorporates both the sexual and the political. This is an important move toward understanding the dominance of heteronormativity, and the response of queer activism in relation to the labor movement. As recognition of the needs of LGBT workers grow, it becomes clear that this is not a homogenous category, and that persistent political activism is critical if gains are to be made for workers' rights. As with all the chapters in this section, political spaces won by self-organizing have assumed an integral dimension of rights campaigns within trade unions. Franzway and Fonow document historical and current examples of campaigns and strategies that have been developed from the local to transnational levels. They argue that mutual benefits are possible and evident as queer activists and feminists have the potential to revitalize and expand the boundaries of the labor movement by pushing unions to consider new forms of organizing, new types of workers and workplaces, and new agendas.

In the final chapter, "Ne'er the Twain Shall Meet? Reflections on the Future of Feminism and Unionism," Jennifer Curtin reflects on the future possibilities for feminism and unionism, identifying three divisions that continue to have an impact: the historically hostile relationship between feminism and labor; the disciplinary divisions among researchers that sees trade unions and feminism trapped between separate intellectual silos; and finally women's activism within the trade union movement is often forgotten (hence the value of this book). Curtin begins by reviewing the way in which feminist strategies have been articulated in discussions of gender

and political theory and explore the difficulties associated with categorizing strategies of inclusion as inherently nontransformative. She identifies how union women have taken up these strategies and through a consideration of their impact demonstrates that analysis benefits feminism as well as union women. Curtin pays particular attention to the question of political space as she terms it, and argues that it is possible to suggest that the activism of labor movement feminism is potentially transformative despite its guiding principle being one of inclusion.

Curtin goes on to examine inclusive strategies with a particular focus on the strategies of separate organizing and women's representation and reflects on how these might be interpreted as potentially transformative. While separate women-only unions have become rare (see Broadbent, Chap. 13, this volume, for an example), Curtin finds that such strategies have contributed to a degree of transformation of internal trade union agenda and a reconfiguring the gendered dimensions of labor market participation. In conclusion, Curtin argues that feminism and unionism have much in common under current conditions of globalization, and that it makes sense to pool resources for the promotion of social rights and economic citizenship.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Making globalization work for women would appear to be a tall order. Researchers and activists alike have rightly criticized the current model of globalization for the growth of inequalities, unemployment, unfair trade, financial crises, and environmental disasters. Proposals for alternatives abound—from the ILO's decent work agenda to the more wide-ranging proposals for economic democracy and systemic transformations emanating from those within and around the World Social Forum. This book volume is a contribution to the discussions taking place at both national and global levels.

Bringing together trade unionists, academics, and activists committed to gender equality and economic citizenship, this book project has been as much a political endeavor as an intellectual one. The complexities and contradictions of the neoliberal model of capitalist globalization call for conceptual work, political critiques, and policy recommendations, which the contributors to this book provide. In addressing the deficits of globalization, we offer a feminist intervention in the debates currently taking place within trade unions, intergovernmental organizations, and research networks. And by placing social rights and economic citizenship at the center of our analyses and recommendations in order to make globalization work for women, we present an alternative framework to the flawed model of neoliberal capitalism.

## NOTES

1. For details on the ILO's labor standards, and for information on its *decent work* campaign, see [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org).

2. The care economy, or what some call the sphere of reproduction (as distinct from material production) refers to activities associated with the care of individuals, households, and families, whether paid or unpaid. Child care, housework, and elder care typically are carried out by women in the family, migrant workers, or undocumented workers. See, for example, Folbre (2006) and Beneria (2008).

3. The ICFTU was renamed the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) following a merger in 2006.

4. A number of cross-national datasets measure women's rights, including political, economic, and social rights. See, for example, the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset, which covers 195 countries: <http://ciri.binghamton.edu/>.

5. There is a robust body of research by feminist scholars that examines the role women and feminists play in the revitalization and democratization of organized labor at the national, regional and transnational level. See Boris and Klein (in press), Broadbent and Ford (2008), Brooks (2007), Chatterjee (2001), Cobble (2007), Colgan and Ledweth (2000), Foley and Baker (2009), Gupta (2008), Latour (2008), Moccio (2009), Seidman (2007), Soonok (2003), and Xin (2008).

6. Fantasia and Voss (2004) argue for a new "labor metaphysic" that addresses organizationally and symbolically the spaces between unions. They believe that union renewal lies in the active cultivation of the spaces between existing unions and between unions and other institutions (communities, churches and religious organizations, civic associations, social movements, etc.) and between the labor movement and those stigmatized groups previously ignored by the labor movement. This is the way for labor to regain some of its former significance in the symbolic vocabulary of society.

7. For a summary description, visit the UNESCO Website: [http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=8102&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=8102&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) and [http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=9429&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=9429&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

8. <http://www.barnard.edu/bcrw/justice/index.htm>

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