GENDER AND GLOBALIZATION: FEMALE LABOR AND WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper casts a gender perspective on globalization to illuminate the contradictory effects on women workers and on women’s activism. The scope of the paper is global. The sources of data are UN publications, country-based data and newsletters from women's organizations as well as the author’s fieldwork. The paper begins by examining the various dimensions of globalization-economic, political and cultural, with a focus on their contradictory social-gender effects. These include inequalities in the global economy and the continued hegemony of the core, the feminization of labor, the withering away of the developmentalist/welfarist state, the rise of identity politics and other forms of particularism, the spread of concepts of human rights and women's rights, and the proliferation of women's organizations and transnational feminist networks. I argue that, although globalization has had dire economic effects, the process has created a new constituency-working women and organizing women who may herald a potent anti-systemic movement. World-systems theory, social movement theory, and development studies should take account of female labor and of oppositional transnational feminist networks.

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