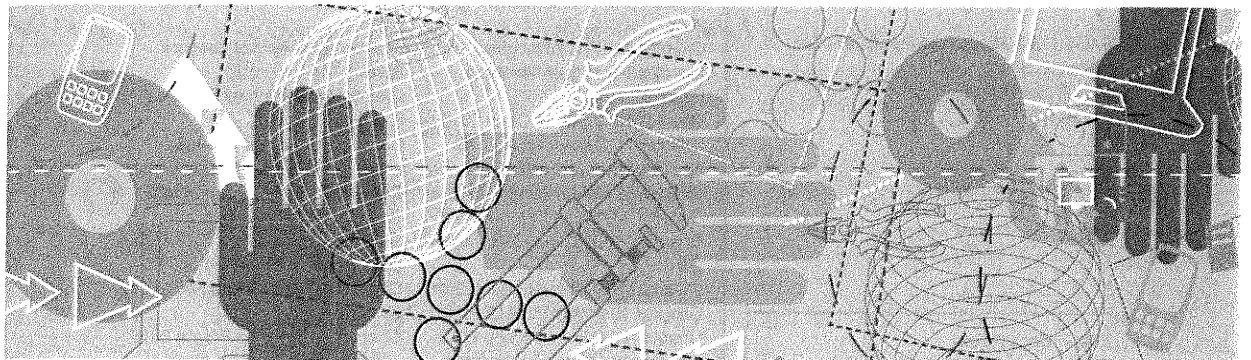


The SAGE Handbook of  
**the Sociology of Work  
and Employment**



Edited by  
Stephen Edgell, Heidi Gottfried  
and Edward Granter

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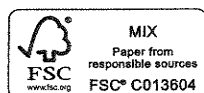
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Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd,  
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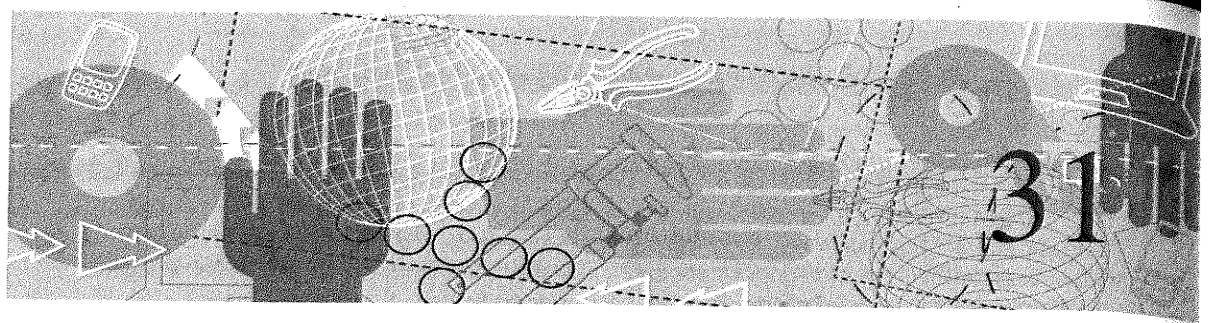
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Library of Congress Control Number: 2015940891

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-4462-8066-9



# Globalization and Outsourcing

Winifred R. Poster and Nima L. Yolmo

## INTRODUCTION

Labour on a transnational scale has typically referred to global production, international divisions of labour, and offshore factories. In this chapter, we consider how things have changed in the twenty-first century. We begin with a discussion and debates about the meanings of globalization and explicate some of the major dynamics that have transformed labour on a transnational scale. Here we consider neoliberal policies, multinational corporations, and the flexibilization of work and organizations.

Next we move to a discussion on the distinctiveness of outsourcing as the current wave of labour globalization. This is a trend heavily influenced by advancements in information and communication technologies, the rise of the service economy, and the intimate economies of marketization and globalization. Outsourcing, we argue, has put up for transnational exchange a wider and more precarious set of labour activities for workers (especially those in the global South).

'Global labour' is no longer limited to manual work. In recent incarnations, firms are sending abroad highly skilled knowledge jobs as well as unskilled bodily work. To illustrate this point, we highlight three cases: *software development and call centres* as examples of white-collar outsourcing; *big box and direct selling* as examples of retail outsourcing; and *reproductive surrogacy and organ trades* as examples of body, medical, and health outsourcing. We follow this with an examination of local and global strategies for improving and empowering labour, with particular attention to corporate social responsibility programmes, consumer activism, and non-governmental organizations.

## MEANINGS AND LANGUAGES OF GLOBALIZATION

The term globalization has been plagued by over-use and under-specification, very often aggrandized to ambiguous flows that cross

borders, or else reduced to a proxy for forces of capitalism and commercial enterprises. However, debates surrounding globalization inhabit a plurality of contexts, imaginings, and discursive formations. We turn to Moghadam (2005, pp. 25–26) in this regard, who reminds of the multi-levels operating in tandem within globalization. For her, globalization is ‘a systemic process of development and change, or a new process of social system building, at a global level, including a global economy, institutionalized but unequal nation-states, and transnational movements and networks’.

Globalization thus includes the operations of capitalism and other political economies, but it is not limited to these alone. It is defined by the activism of varied social movements, including those of labour locally and transnationally. In addition, there is also the need to emphasize the persisting role of the nation-state in determining the conditions of work and social security, even as new political assemblages have displaced old nation-states.

In the field of labour studies, feminist scholars like Heidi Gottfried point out the dynamic features of globalization, including an ‘increasing frequency and intensity of interaction on multiple scales’ (2013, p. 192), ‘between production and social reproduction, between the intimate sphere and abstract economic laws, and between micro-level and macro-level political-economic relationships’ (2013, p. 200). In this way, feminists have alerted us to the need of problematizing fixed categories of analysis with regards to globalization. In particular, these theories have been attuned to the uneven integration and valuation of men’s and women’s working lives in the spaces of the global North and South.

Within the field of comparative industrial relations, the discussion about global labour patterns has emerged from two somewhat opposed viewpoints. One argument is that there has been a *convergence* of work structures worldwide (Frenkel, 1994). Through the process of transferring operations overseas, organizations export their labour policies along with their capital and technology. Some

argue that this happens in an ethnocentric or exploitative manner (Florida & Keeney, 1991; Frobel, Heinrichs & Kreye, 1980). Others see it as a harmonious ‘flattening’ process (Friedman, 2005). In either case, the result is a homogenization of labour. In contrast, the second view points to a *divergence* among work patterns. Because organizations themselves are ‘embedded’ in the social environments where they are situated (Granovetter, 1985), work relations vary greatly. This variation is a result of factors such as regional industrial networks (Saxenian, 1994), the state (Burawoy, 1985), cultural beliefs and practices (Hofstede, 1991), and labour resistance patterns (Belanger, Edwards, & Haiven, 1994).

It is possible, alternatively, that there is a more nuanced and overlaid pattern. There may be simultaneous homogenization and divergence of the labour process, given that corporate organizations inhabit multiple spaces, both local and global. One could say that firms (and other types of enterprises, see discussion below) are themselves embedded in two (or more) social environments – those of their origin as well as those of their physical location.

In exploring contemporary dynamics, we deepen the notion of globalization with regard to labour in a number of ways. First, we consider Moghadam’s notion of ‘unevenness’. The politico-economic processes and struggles for workers’ rights shape each other in multifarious and paradoxical ways that are not captured by the binaries of tradition versus modernity, identity versus strategy, etc. Moving beyond the notion of globalization as a purely hegemonic, homogenizing force of Western rationality can help us see how its discourses and practices are structured by their reception in particular locations at specific conjunctures. Instead, there is a need to evolve a culturally grounded political economy that would take into account the effects of local histories and culture with a global perspective on fundamental rights.

In turn, and as a second point, we seek to account for variable outcomes of globalization and labour. In some cases, the connection

between these two themes has been associated with the dislocation and impoverishment of workers. In other cases, however, it has led to improved global labour conditions and new forms of labour. Adopting a multi-level perspective that is both ethnographic and structural helps to illuminate these varying outcomes, as well as the labour forms and conditions therein.

Third, we chart alternative and multi-directional flows within globalization. Labour processes on a transnational scale are not limited to the movement of jobs from the global North to the global South. Rather, labour patterns are more accurately described in patterns of transnational webs that criss-cross and circulate between borders and sectors (Poster, 2013). It is crucial to recognize how global labour is also generated through reverse flows, such as those emerging from the global South and moving to the North, as well as those between regions of the global South in so-called South-South dynamics.

Fourth, we reconsider the language used to describe the participants. Previous concepts (like First/Third World) present a Eurocentric vision of the world, privileging powerful nations. Similarly, notions of developed/developing imply a linear path that some countries follow to 'become' like others. Instead, we use the terms 'global North' and 'global South' to draw attention to broad-scale socio-economic inequalities among countries (i.e., the US, Europe, and Japan versus South America, Africa, South/SouthEast Asia, etc.). Of course, these terms have their own limitations. For instance, they overlook important nuances *within* regions, such as marginalized nations in the North, and powerful nations in the South. (See Rai [2002] for an informative discussion.) Still, the terms global North and South reflect current geo-political hierarchies in a less normative manner than those of the past.

Finally, there is a need to understand globalization from the perspective of those whose lives are adversely affected by it. The phenomena a exclusion and marginalization are integral aspects of post-colonial

capitalist development (Sanyal, 2007). The dominant frame has looked at these societies as primarily consisting of two sectors: the formal/modern/industrialized/capitalist,<sup>1</sup> and the informal/traditional/pre-modern/pre-capitalist. The latter is often understood as a space that capital has been unable to take control of and mould. Yet, as Sanyal argues, the concept of a 'need-based economy' reflects an in-between space of activity. It refers to production, not for accumulation, but for consumption to satisfy a need. Because 'these activities are entirely embedded in the circuit of money and exchange' (2007, p. 215), they are not classified as part of a 'subsistence economy'. Rather, the work requires access to a market, and, moreover, is often mediated by the state (in the form of welfarist regimes) or by development organizations. An example is that of 'micro-credit', whereby individuals survive through meagre loans. With these, they participate in the market as self-employed entrepreneurs, but are rarely able to earn enough income to expand beyond their needs.

Thus, it is important to see these contractual subsistence sectors as not residual, but actively created in the course of the expansion of the 'accumulation sector'. It operates through the dispossession of marginal workers, and by transferring resources from the accumulation sector to keep it going. This transfer is mediated by the state, which means that, in turn, the need-based sector is more often supported by and dependent upon the state. This account of the need economy helps to elucidate the economic contexts of some areas in the global South, driving individuals to engage in emerging types of globalized labour (as we discuss below).

Addressing the issue of class, we see that people employed in this sector are not workers in the traditional sense, i.e., those *without* the means of production, and able to sell only their labour power. Some may indeed have access to the means of production (e.g., 'self-employed' persons), while nonetheless remaining as part of the dispossessed. As such, unionization and working-class politics (which to a larger

extent are predicated on the exploitation of wage labour) need to be attentive to these changes in sectoral work relations (Sanyal, 2007). The hegemonizing forces of globalization draw their sustenance from the living labour of workers, by producing different hierarchies, social connections, orderings of work relations, and distributions of wealth.

## MARKERS OF GLOBALIZATION

When it comes to work and labour, several dynamics of globalization become salient markers: neoliberal economic systems, transnational corporations, flexibilization, and gender, race, class, and sexuality.

### *Neoliberalism and the Rise of Financial Regimes*

Globalization is often put forth as the unrestricted movement of goods and labour across state borders. Yet, the complex interweaving of national regulation, transnational capital, inter-provincial competition, and the nexus of business and local government interests are crucial to understanding the process. The beginning of the twentieth century saw the centralization of capital along with the formation of monopolies and oligarchies in industry and banking. This moment led to the emergence of 'finance capital', with important implications for the role of the state and the globalization of labour. As economies became more intertwined through trade and finance, growth in industrializing countries came largely from commodity exports – with scant productivity, industrial investment, or diversification in technology and economy. This new situation paved the way for flexibilization of work, liberalization of trade and finance, privatization, and deregulation. In addition, it is largely agreed that the agenda of neoliberalism has been not only economic, but also social and cultural. This is evident in its doctrines and programmes to insulate the

market from politics, and in its active constitution of subjectivities like the consumer citizen and shareholder democracy.

In this changed context, legal systems known as the 'investment rules regime' have been significant in shaping the ensemble of rules and institutions associated with economic globalization (Schneiderman, 2013). These transnational legal forms are aligned to cater to the interests of powerful capital-exporting states, mostly in the global North. Institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund also form part of the nexus of the investment rules regime.

These dynamics have been critical to countries in the South, in terms of corporate responsibility and the potential for labour mobilization. If we look back to recent history, the Marshall Plan of the late 1940s is often seen as a watershed in the emergence of an institutional discourse of development. Its rhetoric proclaimed that policies and programmes would replace the old imperialist exploitation of the Third World with a democratic fair dealing. On one hand, it would bring down levels of poverty (viewed as a threat to the security of both industrializing and industrialized nations), and on the other hand, it would prevent the newly emerging sovereign states from being influenced by Communism (Saunders, 2002).

However in effect, this strategy translated into unequal protectionist policies and structural adjustment programmes (SAP), as the neoliberal agenda was pushed forward by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund during the 1970s to 1980s in the global South (Asher, 2009). Essentially, this mandated a 'stabilization' process: deflating the economy, reducing the rate of growth, and curbing 'excessive' demands through deflationary policies. Reduction of fiscal deficit was deemed to be central to both the stabilization and structural adjustment components of the neoliberal reform package. The idea behind these policies was to create an environment in industrializing countries that would be conducive to and attract substantial foreign capital inflows, in

order to make up for the absence of adequate domestic capital. However, the global implementation of this deflationary agenda has been negligible. Rather, a substantial part of these capital inflows comes from money with high returns (i.e., speculative and footloose funds). Likewise a large part of FDI represents the cross-border financing of mergers and acquisitions by transnational corporations (Mundial, 1997).

The consequences of SAP for labour specifically have been less favorable: a sharp increase in unemployment, a decline in the remuneration of work, an increase in food dependency, a grave deterioration of the natural environment, a deterioration in health care systems, a privatization of educational institutions, a decline in productive capacity and democratic settings, and large-scale external debt.

Furthermore, the interests of labour become increasingly compromised within the legal system. The international arbitration of investment disputes is structured on a model of private law (i.e., requiring governments to function as rational economic subjects whose first and foremost accountability is to investors and not to their citizens). A bias in the favour of powerful states is evident in many scenarios: the negotiation of free trade and investment treaties, the decisions of international investment tribunals, and the responses of investor-state disputes. While some posit the state as key in enforcing corporate responsibility, its participation in this regard is increasingly limited. In reality, the state has multiple and even contradictory roles, such as being home and host state to global business interests, and being regulator and enforcer of contracts and property rights. Thus as a political project, the investment rule regime curtails the redistributive capacity of the states, on one hand, and dampens citizen expectations and rights, on the other. In this sense, economic globalization over the past three decades under the neoliberal agenda has been detrimental to the lives and livelihoods of the larger populations of the world.

### ***Transnational Corporations***

Transnational corporations (TNCs) have become a compelling focal point of the globalization process, as movers of technology, resources, and information from one region of the world to another. The United Nations (UN) defines transnational corporations as legal organizations that have branches in at least two countries, all following a common set of strategies (Sauvant & Miroux, 2000, p. 267). McMichael (2000, pp. 95–96) notes: ‘TNCs account for two-thirds of world trade. From 1970 to 1998, the number of TNCs rose from 7,000 to 60,000, with more than 500,000 foreign affiliates. The combined sales of the largest 350 TNCs in the world exceed the GNPs of all Third World countries’. In 2008, 82,000 transnational corporations controlled 810,000 subsidiaries in different countries (Miroux, Fujita, Mirza, & Joachim, 2009, p. 17).

The global South is the recipient for much of this TNC activity. Half of the top 20 economies (ranked by foreign direct investment [FDI] inflows from TNCs) are industrializing countries and transitional economies. However, the global South is also gaining in its participation in TNC activity. FDI by transnational corporations from industrializing countries (along with that from transitional economies) accounted for 39 per cent of global FDI outflows in 2014, compared with only 12 per cent at the beginning of the 2000s (Zhan, 2014).

### ***Flexibilization***

A particularly important feature of TNCs is their flexibility. Rather than previous systems of mass production, which tended to be ‘rigid’ (i.e., one product is made in one way and in one place), TNCs increasingly use a ‘flexible’ system of production in which their geography is dispersed, their functions are diversified, their pace is unstable and rapid, and their plans are short-term and changeable. Furthermore, while the meaning of flexibility

is partly *structural*, describing changes from a unified to a diverse organizational form, it is also *relational*, referring to global political manoeuvrability and the ability to exploit global South sites, markets, and populations in new ways.

Two types of flexibility describe the dynamics of TNCs. Horizontal flexibility describes the increasing global interconnectedness of TNCs with other local firms. Rather than being unitary, monolithic organizations, TNCs take the form of a 'global web' (Hoogvelt, 2001, p. 127): 'The transnational enterprise has evolved from company organization to a loosely confederated network structure (global web) in which many discrete fabrication activities and services are bought in for the short term'.

Vertical flexibility describes the intra-organizational changes within global firms, specifically regarding the treatment of labour. It refers to the way TNCs attenuate their connection and/or responsibility to workers, employing global South workforces in a variety of tenuous capacities: '[global] decentralization of operational activity fundamentally changes the capital-labour relation – through part-time employment, if-and-when contracts, and through self-employment and piecemeal work and so on' (Hoogvelt, 2001, p. 145). This process of labour flexibilization is augmented even further by the actions of local governments. As a consequence of the global finance and state reconstruction dynamics described above, global South governments have set up 'export processing zones' (EPZs) to attract the TNCs. Here, TNCs are exempt from local labour laws, undermining their responsibility for fair working conditions even further.

In an era where employers actively favour flexibility and where work travels from the space of the factories to households, work is increasingly fragmented. Firms have curtailed full-time, permanent, in-house employment, and accompanying benefits of health insurance and pensions, in efforts to reduce costs and manage competition. Instead, they

have turned towards reduced work hours, a removal of job security, hire and fire at will policies, and the outsourcing of work to subcontractors and temporary staffing firms. In turn, workers have to be flexible to fit into these new precarious settings.

Flexibility is multi-scalar in its origins and destinations. Global operations may involve several nodes that are connected through scattered organizational mappings and hidden labour forces. One example is how companies may disperse work within the national landscape, radiating operations out from the parent hub to regional sites (Holtgrewe, 2007). Another is how companies may incorporate temporary workers, both locally and globally. Indeed, research shows that outsourcing firms are associated with a high use of contingent workers (Granter, 2009; Shire, Schonauer, Valverde, & Mottweiler, 2009). In all these ways, globalized work is increasingly likely to draw from marginal workforces and to structure employment in marginalized ways.

### *Gender, Race, and Class*

In more recent times, there has also been an emphasis on the 'gendering' of this process, and the central role of gender in globalization (Collins, 2009; Plankey-Videla, 2012; Poster, 2002; Salzinger, 2003). Examples from within export processing zones show that multinationals often hire women *exclusively* for their workforces. These industries are also internationalizing at a greater pace in comparison to others. Likewise, a well-documented pattern in the sociology of work is the devaluation of a job as it becomes more sex segregated. Wages and other rewards decline as the female labour force increases and the work is labelled as feminine. Accordingly, such occupations are often referred to as 'pink-collar' jobs. This particular aspect of feminization and flexibilization of labour is essential to the expansion of international capital and not a mere consequence of it.



Simultaneously, there has also been a rise in what Poster (2013) calls techno-masculinities within the ICT sector. Here research documents an ascendant masculinity in the global South, by charting the involvement of Indian men in high-end jobs and as decision-makers in the IT industry. In such roles, they are challenging the hegemony of the North and repositioning relations of masculinity.

We adopt a complex view of how race, class, sexuality, and nation play out in labour markets through an approach of intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Poster, 2002). This concept points to the way that systems of inequality are interlocking and inseparable. Working-class status, for instance, may be experienced differently by women in the global South compared to women in the global North. It also means that groups may experience contradictory locations of privilege and subordination on different axes of inequality. For some women of colour and/or in the global South, this means experiences of double or triple discrimination, and opposing demands between the multiple subordinate groups they are affiliated with.

In sum: gender, race, caste, and class enter the globalization process in multiple ways. Workplaces are embedded with identities along lines of gender, race, sexuality, and other markers. Stated or unstated, these occupational and organizational dynamics privilege dominant identities of masculinity, whiteness, and heterosexuality. They subsequently enforce social inclusion and exclusion of employees based on displays of those features. Thus, the management of identity is not just about domination, but also about enacting segregation and stabilizing particular workplace practices and habits.

## **OUTSOURCING: THE CONTEMPORARY FACE OF GLOBALIZED LABOUR**

### ***Definitions***

Outsourcing is the contracting out of particular functions of a company, either to an employee

or to another firm. This 'service provider', as it is called, can often do these tasks more cost-effectively and efficiently. These outsourced functions are not typically central to the output of the originating company. For instance, a real estate company might contract out its advertising and security operations to firms specializing in those tasks. However, the bulk of outsourcing, especially in the early stages of the industry, has been related to routine clerical and billing functions. Over time, outsourcing has come to take many forms, and firms have begun to send a variety of work processes to countries that have cheaper labour and more relaxed regulations.

*International* outsourcing reshapes the geography of this process by moving the work across national borders. As opposed to onshore firms that operate in their own countries, offshore firms may be either multinational subsidiaries of their originating firms, or else subcontractors of the host country that take on foreign clients. Reflecting the drive for cheaper labour and infrastructure costs, offshoring displaces work from the local business environment further, by separating the production process from both the customer base as well as the employers. Moreover, many firms in the global North are choosing locations in the global South for their outsourcing. Thus, they are not only crossing national borders, but also lines of global economic power. This makes the context and environment of daily operations transnational on multiple accounts – in terms of the physical as well as the geo-political distance from home firms.

This transnational context is what links the twin dynamics of globalization and outsourcing. Both involve labour patterns that traverse national borders, with employers or business owners in one country, and the employees and 'production' in another. However, in our conceptualization, outsourcing is unique from earlier forms of global labour in several ways. Classic global labour has been characterized by: (1) a direct and linear organizational linkage between employers and

employees – i.e., through a multinational firm or its subsidiaries; (2) a common production base in manufacturing; and (3) industries that are in the formal sector and/or ‘legal’.

What is happening now through outsourcing is much more obtuse, tenuous, and varied, straddling the lines of ethics and legality. It involves a full range of activities – in terms of industry, occupation, and tasks – from high skilled and high paying, to low skilled and subsistence wages. In fact, what marks outsourcing as especially distinctive is the extent to which it pushes the boundaries of what can (and should) be considered labour. As we will illustrate below, the types of activities that can be hired by transnational personnel run the gamut of what can be considered ‘employment’.

Accordingly, we use the term outsourcing in a broad sense – as the global transfer of many kinds of exchange activities and labours which are traditionally done on-site, in a local market or within national borders.

### **Motivating Forces**

This current wave of outsourcing has been precipitated by several factors. A particularly crucial event for the timing of the outsourcing industry has been the *advancement of information and communication technologies* (ICT). By the end of the twentieth century, ICT took a global turn. The Internet expanded on a transnational scale, linking firms, people, and work. Satellite and fibre-optic infrastructures enabled network connections. Cell phones and voice over Internet protocols enabled communications between employees and employers, but also employees and consumers. For the first time, workers in one country could interact directly with customers in another. All of these developments meant that data, information, and communication could be coordinated cheaply and speedily across countries.

The implications for labour are many. In a direct sense, work which is technology-centred could be exported globally. The most

common forms are information technology outsourcing (ITO) and business process outsourcing (BPO). Furthermore, we are seeing an application of collaborative technologies as well as a rise in virtual teams through outsourcing. This changes and challenges the nature of IT work (Brooks, 2006). In an indirect sense, these developments provide a new global platform for technology-enabled labour. Even non-technology-related work can now be done through ICTs, and thus transferred over sea, land, and air. It should be noted, at the same time, that while the rise in ICT-related industries is profoundly restructuring the nature of work and identities, the bulk of the labour force continues to be employed in traditional industries.

Another critical juncture has been the *rise of the service economy*. If manufacturing was the trademark of the international division of labour in previous eras, services are now the fastest growing jobs in the formal sectors of the economy around the world (Poster, 2007a). This work is fundamentally different from factory work, in that these jobs involve doing something for people rather than making things.

A service can be conceptualized broadly in a number of ways: (1) according to its non-material outcomes, given that it doesn't directly produce, grow, or extract things (ILO, 2001); or (2) according to its relational characteristics, given that it may provide front-line assistance to customers or the public (MacDonald & Sirianni, 1996). Services are also identified by their roles in particular industrial sectors, like ‘social’ services of health, education, and government work, ‘distributive’ services of transportation, and ‘personal’ services of retail, restaurants, janitorial work, childcare, etc. An increasing proportion of these jobs, however, are in ‘producer’ services that ‘provide information and support for the productivity and efficiency of firms’ (ILO, 2001, p. 109).

The share of employment in services has grown dramatically over the last half of the twentieth century. The world average rose from approximately 20 to 50 per cent between the early 1960s and the late 1990s. While recent figures from the International

Labour Organization continue to mark a decline in manufacturing jobs, service jobs have expanded by 15 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, and by as much as 45 per cent in Latin America. In the South-East Asian and Pacific region, the share of employment in services is estimated to have risen from 33.1 per cent in 2002, to 36.7 per cent in 2012 (Ernst & Kapsos, 2013).

Furthermore, Sassen (2008) describes how the organization of the transnational economy is marked by a 'service intensity'. Firms have increased demands for professional and producer services due to trends of advancing information technology, deregulation and securitization of finances, and hypermobility of capital. Polarization of labour markets follows this process. High-income work expands in technical, managerial, and financial markets, which in turn gentrifies the lifestyles of the global elite, and fuels a demand for low-wage workers to provide a wide range of personal and household services (health, domestic, retail, tourism, etc.).

Services, then, are integral for the dynamics of outsourcing. They raise questions about the meaning and experience of transnational labour. For instance, this work is distinctive for its performative requirements, often involving direct relations between employees, customers and consumers around the world. Service labour is therefore racialized and nationalized, as it incorporates global South workers selling brands and providing services for global North capital. Service work is also gendered, as it involves 'communicative' and 'bodily' labour from women, as Lan (2001, 2003) has theorized. In their theorization of 'body/sex work', Wolkowitz and colleagues draw attention to 'a new trend toward recognizing the embodiment of labour and that the body, emotions and sexuality are sites of commodification' (2013, p. 4).

Lastly, our focus on outsourcing emphasizes the growth in what Spike Peterson (2003) calls the *intimacies of globalization*:

Marketization penetrates the most intimate spheres of social life. Activities previously considered

non-waged and private – sexual relations, biological and social reproduction, leisure activities, household maintenance – are increasingly commodified and drawn into circuits of capital accumulation. (p. 78)

Significantly, circuits of capital include the family as well. As many studies have shown, families are increasingly sites of transnational outsourcing. Through the recruitment and hiring of domestic labour (nannies, cleaners, etc.) across national borders, families partake in global employment regimes (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Lan, 2006). A perspective on the intimate economy of the family then pushes the boundaries of what and whom we consider to be the primary agents of globalization. Outsourcing, in this conception, is an activity pursued by a variety of actors: from formal corporations, to information enterprises, and family units. Hochschild (2003) refers to this as the 'commercialization of intimate life.'

Globalization is not merely about the logics of finance, technology, material resources, consumer products, etc. It is also about the commodification of the most personal aspects of human capacities – their bodies, identities, and private lives. The global markets in bodies and body parts will be explored as an example of these intimacies, as we see the transnationalism of economies in medicine, health, and reproduction.

### **SERVICE, SALES, AND SURROGACY: THE SHIFTING DOMAINS OF EMPLOYMENT UNDER OUTSOURCING**

Over the past two decades, outsourcing has transgressed further and further from the traditional case of manual labour, and expanded in both directions of the occupational ladder. Here we highlight three domains that involve outsourcing jobs from the global North to the South. Each has its own particular contours of labour and its own opportunities and costs for employees.

### ***Knowledge and Communications Work: Data Processing and Call Centres***

The most readily identifiable or oft-cited example of outsourcing in the media is white-collar work. Since the 2000s especially, global North firms began to send their office jobs abroad. This includes both upper-level labour in knowledge work and lower-level labour in clerical work. It is happening across a full range of industries and fields – from high-tech, to medicine and law, education and government. It encompasses a dizzying range of occupations: radiological analysis, tax preparation, primary-school tutoring, legal transcription, and even theological counselling.

Outsourcing operates in many regions of the world, from Eastern Europe, to Africa, to South-East Asia, and South America. Here, we focus on India which is among the top destinations (along with the Philippines). Close to three million Indians work in this sector. Aside from English-language proficiency and lower wage rates, this workforce has been carefully groomed by the Indian government through the development of IT schools and universities. These complement other inducements from the Indian state, including industrial parks, tax exemptions, and subsidies to outsourcing firms. Eighty per cent of Fortune 500 companies now outsource some of their functions abroad, and 50 per cent outsource to India in particular.

The higher end of Indian outsourcing work is in software engineering. These employees write code and develop computer programs for firms in the global North. The median annual salary for these workers is 290,000 Rupees (or \$6,444). It tends to be male-dominated, with women averaging 20–30 per cent of the workforce. Because the work is digitally mobile in its production, labour process, and output, but stable in the grounding of workers' bodies, Aneesh (2006) has referred to this process as 'virtual migration'. Outsourcing creates an invisible workforce that can be paid a fraction of wages in the

US, while also decoupled from that country's employment laws, policies, and benefits.

The lower end of outsourcing is back-office clerical work, such as data entry, transcription, and customer service. This is called 'pink-collar' work, for its association with secretarial work and its feminized workforce in many countries (Freeman, 2000; Zaidi & Poster, 2013). Call centre employees, as a prime example, work as inbound help-desk operators or outbound telemarketers and collections agents for customers in the US, UK, and elsewhere. These jobs have noteworthy returns for the primarily young and educated workforce. Workers receive a median salary of 143,000 Rupees a year (or \$3,178), along with the social status of professional office employment. This often exceeds the earnings of comparable jobs and, in some cases, even that of employees' parents.

At the same time, there are unique and highly globalized costs of outsourced work in India. Take call centres, for example. Workers endure a *reversal of work time* reconfiguring their work schedules completely to the night, as they cater to foreign daylight hours (Poster, 2007a).

They also face intense working conditions: extreme routinization in the scripts they recite, time pressure to answer hundreds of calls per shift, and high-tech monitoring through their computers. Technological surveillance of workers is, of course, not new. Communications giant AT&T was an early developer of, if not a leader in, systems for controlling the pace of work and scripting interactions with customers (Batt, 1999; Batt & Moynihan, 2002). However, what is happening in the current wave of global outsourcing is more 'intimate', as software programs automatically track the emotional states of participants in these service exchanges (Poster, 2011). This process, moreover, is transnational, as algorithms operate across borders through the Internet: from firms in the US, to their workers in India, and back to customers in the US.

Global call centre workers face additional challenges. Some are asked by employers to perform *national identity management* (NIM), whereby they pose as Americans (and

other nationalities, like those in the UK) for the job. Workers change their names, accents, and/or styles of conversation to convey that they are in the US (Poster, 2007b). This may aid in communication across borders, and ease the discomfort that US consumers have about talking to foreigners. Yet, it has costs for Indian workers in terms of emotional distress and mental instability. Workers report nightmares and crying episodes as a result of the hostilities they experience on the phone, and, in a few cases, multiple or split personalities as a coping mechanism to manage their American and Indian selves.

Needless to say, national identity management does not necessarily work as envisioned by managers, given that consumers are often able to see through the façade. Moreover, workers do not always perform NIM to its full extent. In fact, many resist the process to varying degrees, which Poster has shown in her research. Outsourcing is, therefore, an ephemeral and/or cyclical process. Factors such as recession, backlash by consumers in the home country, as well as poor communication skills by workers, have led firms (like Dell Computers) to end their contracts, switching them to other countries, or pull out and return later.

Furthermore, these global outsourcing sites ignite or go hand in hand with other social flows like internal labour migrations. In Yolmo's (2011) study, workers are drawn to Delhi-area call centres from the north-east of India. This region is comprised of eight Indian states, collectively sharing borders with China, Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh.<sup>2</sup> It is an area that has experienced a significant history of colonial rule (including the establishment of missionary and eventually private schools that impart English-language learning), as well as current militarization from the Indian state. Thus, prior to entry into the call centre, these workers have been embedded in a context of national struggles and sovereignty movements. This case illustrates how the internal migration of workers within the boundaries of a particular nation-state may reflect transitions between different spaces of

pressure and uncertainty: from militarism and conflict, to contradictions of global identity and time.

### ***Sales Work: Avon Ladies and Walmartization***

Outsourcing is extending in other directions as well – to jobs like sales work. An example is 'direct selling' by companies like Amway and Avon (Biggart, 1989). In direct selling, firms market their products *not* in their own showroom, but by bringing products 'directly' to the consumer. This door-to-door model of sales has been popularized in the US through the icon of the 'Avon lady' who sells beauty items to female consumers in their homes. While Avon ladies are less common in the US now, they are thriving in the global South. Focusing on sales work like this, we get a clear glimpse of how transnational employment is shifting towards the service industries, and alternatively, how services are globalizing.

Starting in the 1950s, Avon began exporting these jobs to countries like Ecuador, Brazil, Thailand, South Africa (Casanova, 2011; Dolan & Johnstone-Louis, 2011; Theroux & Moore, 1994; Wilson, 2004). This process spread direct selling globally: first by employing a primary group of 42,000 workers whose responsibility is to 'recruit, train, and motivate', and then by employing another 5.5 million workers to do the actual sales on the ground. The impact has been a dual process of expanding the business scale and weakening the labour chain – as one set of workers is directly employed (with central roles, sufficient benefits, and secure jobs), and another set of secondary jobs are sent abroad and proliferated (with far less pay and security).

Central to this global model of sales is targeting and incorporating the most vulnerable workforces: low-income women in emerging economies of the global South. In Thailand, direct sellers are former sex workers, farmers, and bureaucrats. In South Africa, Avon

takes advantage of the post-apartheid social conditions: a widening gap between the rich and poor, and a 14 per cent rate of high school completion. In this context, the company's promise of economic and social mobility through direct sales is highly appealing (Dolan & Johnstone-Louis, 2011). Women make ideal sales representatives because they 'tap into ... social worlds' of 'extremely local markets', i.e., their circles and networks of other women, classmates, co-workers, and family (Wilson, 2004, p. 171).

These workers are also willing to venture to places that sales representatives from the global North would rarely go – like up the Amazon by boat (Theroux & Moore, 1994). They earn 25 per cent commission, which might be \$12–\$20 on a good sale. To peasant families who don't read or write, Brazilian Avon ladies sell the dream of being young forever and becoming fairer and taller.

The global dispersion and expansion of sales labour is illustrated through another example – big box retail stores. The penultimate case, US-owned Walmart, is the world's largest private sector employer with 2.1 million workers. It ranked second in the Fortune Global 500 for 2013, and has annual revenues of \$470 billion. In China, for example, Walmart employs 90,000 people. Thus, while the manufacturing sector in China gets a lot of attention by labour scholars, the service sector actually exceeds it in shares of total employment, 35 per cent versus 30 per cent, respectively (Otis, 2013).

This 'Walmartization' emerges from the expanding power of the retail giants. Scale and size is a defining feature of this dynamic. Walmart designs its buildings as 'big boxes', gathering many different kinds of sales in a single warehouse store. Some argue that this strategy benefits communities in the global South, by ridding the market of corrupt middlemen and commission agents who drive up prices. Instead, these stores source directly from farmers and their own suppliers, thereby combining wholesale and retail, and ultimately passing on higher wages to retail sales workers.

However, others argue that for every square foot of space, the number of jobs in the local economy actually *reduces*. For instance in Germany, the growth of this industry into larger enterprises has depressed jobs in retail by 4 per cent a year (Christopherson, 2001). Moreover in global South countries like India, legions of street hawkers and vendors – the historic source of local goods – are put out of work by these giant sales outlets (Bandyopadhyay, 2012). In their place, most of the new jobs are part-time, barely above minimum wage, and without health benefits. Walmart – like other global retail chains – is aggressively anti-union (Christopherson & Lillie, 2005).

Finally, the full impact of sales labour is apparent in the expansion of the transnational consumer society, and the emergence of mega-malls in the global South. New Delhi's landscape, like that of many rapidly urbanizing metropolises around the world, is dotted with these mega-malls.<sup>3</sup> Retailers from Europe, the US, and elsewhere occupy these venues, especially in the upscale malls, representing global capital and the lure of the foreign brand for consumers (Nike, Body Shop, etc.). Yolmo's (2014) ethnographic exploration of these spaces shows that sales work performed in these malls is undertaken mostly by men and women who have migrated to Delhi from other parts of the country. Their shifts are split in two and thus spread out: first from 7 to 11 am, and then from 5 to 9 pm. The schedule adds up to eight hours in total, but workers spend the middle of the day in the mall as they cannot afford the cost of transport back to the areas where they live. Thus, the mall becomes a circuit of earning and consumption, where employees spend their free time and money on coffee and food (Yolmo, 2011).

The case of big box stores and shopping malls reveals an important trend of globalization in employment, namely the move of TNCs and foreign capital into the service sector. Globalizing jobs in the current era are increasingly in retail and sales. In a broader sense then, what is being outsourced is the labour of service.

### ***Body Work: Reproductive Surrogacy***

A third notable trend in global labour is what DasGupta and Dasgupta (2014) call 'outsourcing life'. Combining medical and business imperatives, this model sends abroad the labour of reproductive surrogacy, that is, paying a woman to become implanted with and then gestate the fertilized egg of other biological parents. As such, this case adds a new category of outsourced work to our discussion. Along with jobs in manufacturing, office, and sales, we now have labours of medicine, health and body that move from the global North to the global South.

Transnational surrogacy took off around the mid-2000s, with the onset of two major changes. One was a set of bio-medical advances in assisted reproductive technologies for the development of foetuses outside the mother's womb. The second was the opening of several global South economies to international markets, in particular, sanctioning commercial enterprises in medical arenas. This meant that from the 'consumer' point of view in the global North, surrogacy became accessible to a wider population. Now it would not be limited to the very rich, but also became an option for the middle classes – especially those struggling with infertility, and gay/lesbian couples seeking to start a family (Rudrappa, 2010). India in particular became a popular site for surrogacy, given its abundance of well-qualified doctors and a burgeoning industry of 'medical tourism', in which patients from the global North travel to the global South for cheaper health care.

A conspicuous element of this outsourced labour in India is its caste, class, and gender foundations. Although the surrogates range in their backgrounds, some of the women are residents of slums, lower caste, and/or Muslim. For the full duration of their pregnancies, women may stay in dormitories away from their own families. They receive careful medical attention, but are also monitored in terms of their eating, daily activities, etc. Surrogacy enables these women to open

bank accounts and save for their children's education. However, such 'workers' are paid just a fraction of the wages paid in the global North: \$4,000, compared to \$20,000 and upwards earned in the US. It is not uncommon, furthermore, for women workers to be denied the full sum upon delivery that they were promised at the outset. This was the case for Aasia, whose pregnancy turned out unexpectedly to be twins, an outcome which was not stipulated in the initial contract (Haimowitz & Sinha, 2010). Such a situation reflects the complicated transnational chain of intermediaries between donors and recipients, and their role in setting (or not setting) guidelines for the employment experience. As of 2014, the industry is largely unregulated by the state or international organizations.

This trend reflects a larger process of global commodification in human bodies (Scheper-Hughes & Wacquant, 2002) and the labours accruing therein. Surrogacy outsourcing is akin to industries that sell body parts of living donors: hair and blood, eggs and amniotic fluid, kidneys and lobes of livers (Carney, 2011). With many of these organs, illicit parts are much cheaper and more accessible. Whereas a legal liver may cost \$557,000, an illegal one will cost \$157,000. This fuels the transnationalism of these markets, as desperate patients in the global North seek illicit organs overseas. In fact, many aspects of the supply chain cross multiple national borders. An illicit kidney, for instance, may travel from Kosovo where the donors are recruited, to Turkey and Israel where the doctors are from, to the US and Australia where the buyers reside (Bienstock, 2013).

Such industries are flourishing in places like Africa, the Philippines, India, and China, where structural adjustment programmes, urbanization, and neoliberalism have plunged the working class into poverty, and where few other options exist in the labour market for securing a decent standard of living. People earn \$25 for a pint of blood in India, and \$1,500 for a kidney in the Philippines. For the donor, there are many ironies in the role of bodies, nature, and markets embedded

in this way of earning a living. As Scheper-Hughes & Wacquant recount (2002), some workers spend the income from selling organs to sustain the bodies of other people (e.g., buying food for family members). Others use it to commodify other items from the natural world (e.g., to set up new small businesses in selling flowers).

In sum, these transnational body economies of surrogacy and organ donation reveal how the outsourcing of work has moved into new terrains. They reflect an intimate economy, in which productive and income-generating activities are reconfigured from those of industrial manufacturing, and deepened into the most personal aspects of a worker's 'labour' and corporeal capacities. Certainly, there are parallels to traditional global labour in that 'the gestation of a child may be outsourced in the style of multinational corporations (MNCs) manufacturing their products in Third World countries' (DasGupta & Dasgupta, 2014, p. viii). Yet the distinction here is that 'private reproductive functions are being transformed into usable raw materials and opened up to public consumption' (p. vii). With surrogacy, customers are literally 'renting-a-womb', and workers are 'delivering the finished product' of a baby. That women's bodies are subject to these imperatives of global capitalism speaks to the role of gender in outsourcing.

### IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION AND OUTSOURCING FOR WORKERS

The structural and lived outcomes of these dynamics for workers are many. Some are psycho-social and identity-based. For instance, under- and unemployment have resulted in depression among workers. In the United States, these 'non-workers' are four times more likely than employed people to have thoughts of harming themselves. Among the many reasons for this, some are financial (e.g., anxiety about not being able to support themselves and their families) and others are

related to identity (e.g., losing a sense of routine, purpose, and meaning). For many, there is a growing sense of confusion over whether or not one is in fact an 'employee'. This has made solidarities among workers more difficult and contingent. It also creates increasing pressure on workers to craft a narrative of the productive self that is legitimate to potential employers.

Alternatively, global dynamics of ICT labour may create identity opportunities, especially to counter work-related biases of race, ethnicity, and gender. In the process of constructing cyber-selves, employees may use virtualization to transcend the limitations of body-linked identities. This has the potential to surpass biases and discrimination prevailing against people of colour, immigrants, and women, just on the basis of features like physical appearance and names.

There are material and structural implications of globalization and outsourcing as well. Take flexibilization, for instance. The breakdown of stable jobs can be cyclical and self-reinforcing, given the way it affects many aspects of workers' social reproduction. This happens through trends like: the spread of in-work poverty; declining money for and access to child and elder care; and increasingly irregular hours and sites of work.

Another growing problem is the cycle of debt associated with globalized employment. Among call centre and shopping mall workers in New Delhi, there are numerous cases of workers falling into debt-traps and fraud. One way this happens is that employers align with credit industries, issuing credit cards right along with salary cheque in the workplace. Consequently, workers tend to switch jobs frequently in part as a means to cope with the debt (Yolmo, 2014).

Significantly, there are implications for workers' rights. Outcomes include: a progressive weakening of workers' bargaining power, limited freedom to move out of precarious work, and ineffective protection of workers' rights and benefits. National policies continue to play an important role in the regulation of labour conditions. For instance,



many disputes remain unresolved in the case of migrant employment, given the heterogeneity of the regulatory mechanisms and inadequate definitions of employer and employee relations.

Finally, the issue of globalization and outsourcing points to critical shifts in transnational relations *between women* across the global North and global South. Movements of work and workers across national borders are connecting women together in new ways, while also solidifying hierarchies of race, class, and nation between them. This has been a key theme in previous discussions of 'global care chains' (Isaksen, Umadevi & Hochschild, 2008). By soliciting transnational domestic labour to their homes, women in the global North become employers to, and sometimes exploitative of, women from the global South.

In the case of body, health, and medical outsourcing, these hierarchies are playing out in a vivid way. Women from the global North are navigating gender tensions regarding beauty standards, reproductive incapacities, etc., through the bodies of women in the global South. Signalling themes of intersectionality, however, these bodily labours reveal a host of complexities that transcend the typical binaries of Northern privilege/Southern subordination. Take for example, human hair as a global commodity. Much of the human hair for wigs is sourced in India, from women who donate it as a religious offering at Hindu temples (Carney, 2011). This hair travels to Europe, where it is processed and dyed, and then to the United States, where it is sold as extensions and weaves for a market of largely African-American women.

Yet without 'straight' hair, some of these women are fearful they may not be able to get a job (Rock, 2009). Thus, the consumption of transnational body products by African-American women is itself derived from the experience of labour market and bodily discrimination. This half-billion-dollar industry, ultimately, is profiting from the devaluation of women's bodies in the US and as well as in India. Serious questions need to be asked about which groups may benefit from this

globalized bodily labour, such as the emerging crop of intermediary (and largely male) entrepreneurs within the medical field.

## TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL CHANGE AND LABOUR ACTIVISM

While transnational legal regimes have been instrumental in impeding acts of resistance at various locales in the world, there also appears to be some mobilization at the global level. This activism has been envisioned in different ways, however, with emphasis on sustained innovation and reinvention in the face of continual setbacks.

### *Ethics of Global Production Chains*

Recent abuses in manufacturing work around the world have pointed to the growing need for ethical practices and oversight in global production chains. An example is the case of electronics labour in China. The electronics industry in this country is massive, operating primarily through contracts from the US. Taiwanese outsourcer Foxconn, who makes iPhones and other products for Apple, is the tenth largest employer in the world, with 1.2 million workers (Chan, Pun & Selden, 2013; Qiu, Gregg & Crawford, 2014). Their facilities, mostly located in China, sometimes hire hundreds of thousands of workers at a single site. While electronics work has traditionally been a female-dominated activity around the world, the gender ratio in the Chinese case has shifted recently to a more equal distribution, partly because the industry has grown so large, and partly because the population base is skewed towards men. The labour conditions in these workplaces have been called 'military-style'. Each year, approximately 40,000 fingers are broken or lost among the workers. Such labour conditions were publicly quiet for many years. It was only when 17 workers committed suicide on the premises of the manufacturing plants in 2010, that

American consumers started to take notice of where their Apple devices were coming from.

Another set of incidences drawing international attention occurred in Bangladesh. Garment-makers in Dhaka had been operating under dangerous conditions for decades. This led to a fire in 2012, and then, a few months later in 2013, a building collapse that left over 1,100 workers dead and another 2,500 injured (Greenhouse & Harris, 2014). Observers called it 'the worst disaster in garment industry history'. Employees were mostly female and earning the equivalent of \$37 dollars a month (Muhammad, 2011). They were sewing clothes for a huge range of fashion labels, from Walmart and Target at the low end, to mid-range retailers like Gap, to high-end designers like Ralph Lauren and Armani.

Responses to these events were manifold, and with differing implications. Some have resulted in widespread support and enforceable regulations. An example is the 'Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh', from UNI Global Union and IndustriALL (Hoskins, 2013). It has been signed by 87 retailers, covers 1,500 factories, and is legally binding in case of dispute. Another set of responses is from corporations. Sponsored by firms like Walmart and Gap, these initiatives centre around voluntary self-inspections of factories, and forbid participation by workers or unions. Efforts to expose abuses in global production, as well as hold actors accountable at various points of the supply chain, are therefore ongoing.

### ***Global Labour Standards***

One strategy that has become popular recently is establishing sets of ethical codes for firms to follow as they move throughout the world. In principle, these 'labour standards' are supposed to develop through global political processes. Yet, labour standards for TNCs are still largely set by the national laws and regulatory authority in the country of origin (Christopherson & Lillie, 2005). In

practice then, global labour standards tend to be enforced through transnational corporations (TNC) themselves, that is, by adherence to voluntary codes. As such, local governments (especially in the global South) have proven unable to hold foreign companies responsible for labour and environmental practices. With the curtailment of the labour unions in an increasingly globalized economy, it is imperative to think of new ways of organizing labour and ensuring basic rights.

### ***Corporate Social Responsibility***

Another recent strategy is corporate social responsibility, including public disclosure of the social and environmental practices of firms. This has become important in evaluating corporate activities, regulating adverse economic outcomes, and promoting socially responsible business practices. A crucial initiative towards this end involves monitoring organizations, and sharing factory audits and auditing mechanisms with the public. This requires coordination between different governmental and non-governmental regulations. Increased transparency, improved technical capacities, new mechanisms of accountability to workers and consumers, and non-governmental monitoring are needed to complement existing state regulatory systems (O'Rourke, 2004). It remains to be seen whether non-governmental regulatory systems can support state regulation and help improve standards and monitoring methods.

### ***NGOs, Consumer Campaigns, and Labour Organizing***

Non-governmental organizations are engaged both in critiquing work practices and policies of leading brands, and in providing positive information to build new markets for sustainable and ethically produced goods. They are also involved in building regulatory mechanisms and strengthening state regulations. Thus, by no means do NGO campaigns eliminate the

need for government regulation. However, market campaigns appear to be having significant impacts on consumption and production practices in the sectors they target.

Several of these NGO campaigns are based in the global North, like the US and other countries. For instance, the 1990s saw an increase in anti-sweatshop campaigns – especially by students on college campuses – which took different forms: efforts to change legislation in global South countries, direct pressure on firms in global North countries, and newspaper campaigns. Grassroots activists have targeted multinational firms in the textiles, footwear, and apparel sectors, helping to spread consumer boycotts throughout college campuses (Harrison & Scorse, 2010). Yet, there are challenges in designing campaigns for wage gains and better factory conditions, without endangering employment or relocating plants elsewhere. Over time, anti-sweatshop activism has begun to emphasize ‘living wages’, which are harder to define, enforce, and implement (O’Rourke, 2008).

Also based in the global North is a growing ethical consumption movement which seeks to change market behaviour, as studies show that consumer choices can improve workers’ lives globally. It is also now believed that distributing information about the conditions of workers around the world can influence what we buy. This influence may supplement the workings of the watchdog agencies that monitor working conditions and apply pressure on corporations. However, it is questionable whether or not entrusting regulation to consumer efforts can be effective.

Non-governmental organizations have also been at the forefront of emerging governance institutions that involve private and non-governmental stakeholders in negotiating labour, health and safety, and environmental standards. There are a range of NGOs operating in civil society spaces, including labour advocates and hybrid labour organizations that combine trade union characteristics with non-governmental organizations (see the chapter by Jennifer Chun and Rina Agarwala in this volume). These organizations monitor

compliance, and establish mechanisms of certification and labelling as incentives for firms to meet these standards (Fung, O’Rourke, & Sabel, 2001).

How global governance can be made locally accountable is an issue that remains to be explored. Non-governmental regulations that are transparent, accountable, and democratic can be seen as the beginning of a possible response to the adverse impacts of globalization. However, while they may strengthen regulatory systems and mechanisms for motivating improvements in global supply chains, they also harbour the perils of privatizing regulation and making democratic forms of regulation ineffective.

Seeking ways to coordinate the activities of labour NGOs in the global North (where transnational firms are headquartered and where finance centres are, etc.), with NGOs in the global South (where workers are) is increasingly critical. As labour movements are often much more active in the global South, compared to those in the US, for instance, this momentum can be fruitful to both.

Furthermore, it is important to note that states are critical to the maintenance and legitimacy of transnational legality, and remain salient locales for resistance. States are active players in the structuring of economic globalization, as hosts to global business interests, regulators, and enforcers of contracts and property rights. The role of the state is central in binding both governments and citizens to transnational legal structures. Its unique capacity to *undo* those legal constraints, on the other hand, has often made the state an important site for engaging in critical resistance. Thus, the state itself signifies the legal and institutional structures for limiting – as well as expanding – authority over obligations and prerogatives of citizenship (Butler & Spivak, 2007).

## CONCLUSION

With these cases of labour outsourcing, we have explored the differentiated, multi-faceted,

and ambivalent nature of the phenomenon of globalization. This view calls for attentiveness to the categories and constitutive assumptions through which we view globalization's influences and impacts. It urges us to find new labour alternatives through engaged historical/genealogical inquiries, and through critical dialogue with the existing and emerging traditions. At the same time, there is an urgency to think about the possibilities of whether a particular globalization project has an enabling or disabling capacity for individuals, societies, and the world as a whole. In the context of large-scale inequality, and the loss of security for workers across North and South, it is imperative to think through the process – not merely in the spirit of questioning – but in a way that also entails a responsibility and risk of judgment.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank participants of our research projects in India. Poster's research was conducted under a grant from the National Science Foundation (#SES-0240575). We are also indebted to the Labor Tech reading group, which provided numerous conceptual inspirations for this chapter. Responsibility for the content is our own.

### NOTES

- 1 By 'formal' sector, we refer to the organized, legally protected arenas of labour, rather than those of agriculture or informal economies. It should be noted that most jobs around the world, especially in countries of the global South, are not in the formal sector.
- 2 This region is comprised of eight states at present: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim. The region has a largely shared history, in that its territorial boundaries (as well as social efforts to define, enforce, and reshape them) represent ongoing political projects within colonialism and post-colonialism. Yet, the region abounds

in a variety of different languages, cultures, and forms of local governance (Singh, 2005). Most parts of this region have developed diverse social movements to gain national sovereignty, political autonomy, and cultural self-preservation. These social movements have evolved their own militias over time. In response to continued social struggles, the Indian government has deployed its military force and set laws that grant it generous impunity (Akoijam and Tarunkumar, 2005). As a result, the political situation in the region has engendered different types of vulnerabilities and insecurities at various levels.

- 3 There were 172 operational malls across India in 2009. Out of the 79 operating malls in North India, 44 were in the National Capital Region (surrounding Delhi) alone (Srivastava, 2014). According to an estimate in 2010, another 4 million square feet was lined up for development in 2011–12 in Delhi and its suburbs. The number of malls in the country then grew from 190 in 2010, to 280 in 2012 (*Times of India*, 2010).

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