

## Globalization

### *Countermovements and Community*

Progress is more plausibly judged by the reduction of deprivation than by the further enrichment of the opulent. We cannot really have an adequate understanding of the future without some view about how well the lives of the poor can be expected to go. Is there, then, hope for the poor (Sen 2000)?

Amartya Sen's belief that the gains of economic growth should be directly applied to reducing inequality challenges one of the core assumptions of neoliberal globalization. In the orthodox view, free markets may concentrate wealth in the hands of the few but the few in turn invest in ways that benefit the many. Neoliberal globalists see this model as the best hope for the poor; others, however, believe that the unfettered market model of neoliberal globalization actually deepens poverty and misery.

Intense political struggles have been waged over these ideas, but as we have seen, globalization seldom produces the kinds of tidy outcomes described above. In the heat of the battle, we often lose sight of the fact that globalization is a human construction, a product of the *actions* and *inactions* of people. Hence, the condition of the poor rests on the outcome of the struggles among various factions to conceptualize, define, and realize their contending visions of the future. In this chapter, we examine some of the movements that are attempting to exert democratic control over global processes and ensure that the needs of individuals and communities are not lost in the quest for greater profits.

#### **Globalization, the State, Society, and Markets: Karl Polanyi**

The changing relationship among the state, markets, and society is a central issue within the globalization debate. Since the 1970s, state autonomy has been compromised by the increasing power of global actors—transnational corporations and multinational political institutions. Questions of what causes

shifts in the distribution of power among states and between the state and society are not new ones for social scientists. In the classic work *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi addressed this problem in his analysis of the rise and demise of classical liberalism, or what he calls the “self-regulating market” of laissez-faire capitalism. According to Polanyi (1944, 141), the philosophy of economic liberals in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries derived from the idea that laissez-faire was a natural system. For these theorists, only markets could ensure the optimal allocation of scarce resources; therefore, society should be subordinated to the self-regulating market. The quest then was to “dis-embed” the economy from society, or to uproot the market from social and political institutions, by removing all barriers to the free operation of markets.

Polanyi’s critique convincingly demonstrates that the emergence of a self-regulating market was neither inevitable nor sustainable. Far from a “natural” process, he argued that the self-regulating market system was a creation of middle-class merchants and their political allies, who used the state to produce the laissez-faire system by removing state and business intrusions into the economy. By dis-embedding the market from society, the classical liberals engendered an industrial revolution that produced “an almost miraculous development of the tools of production,” as well as an equally “catastrophic dislocation of the lives of common people” (Polanyi 1944, 33).

The problem, as Polanyi saw it, is the need for the market to commodify everything; and if left unchecked, the self-regulating market would lead to the very “destruction of humanity and transform the environment into a vast wilderness” (Polanyi 1944, 3). While this was a distinct possibility, Polanyi also believed that society contained a self-protection mechanism—the countermovement—that would be triggered by the dislocations caused by market forces.

The countermovement consists of those most “immediately affected by the deleterious action of the market...the working class...using protective legislation, restrictive associations” (Polanyi 1944, 132), such as trade unions and state intervention, to resubordinate market forces to society—to re-embed the market into the institutional structure of society. Quite unlike the conscious effort of creating laissez-faire capitalism, then, the countermovement arises spontaneously to defend society from the dislocations caused by the expansion of the free market. Thus, in Polanyi’s theory, the relationship among the state, markets, and society is continually shaped by a double movement of forces: one consciously favoring self-regulating free markets and a spontaneous countermovement that checks its expansion.

### Corporacy and Civil Society

In the post-1980 period, neoliberals have replaced the classical liberals as the force doggedly pursuing the institutionalization of the self-regulating market

system. The globalization of markets for goods and services pushed by neoliberals would not have surprised Polanyi; in fact, Polanyi argued that “nothing less than a self-regulating market on a world scale could ensure the functioning of” the laissez-faire system (Polanyi 1944, 138). Current policies have not only spread markets throughout the world but created the basis for a dramatic increase in the power of private corporations. As governments privatize and deregulate their previous social functions (e.g., social services, social welfare, job creation), the state becomes increasingly dependent upon corporations to carry out basic public services. The result, according to Charles Derber (2002), is a fusing of the interest among transnational corporations, national governments, and global institutions, or what Derber calls *corporacy*. A defining feature of a corporacy is the disappearance of a “firewall” between the state and large corporations; although the state and society remain independent, it is “one world under business” as corporations increasingly exercise decisive power over the course of national and global economic development (Derber 2002, see also Strange 1997).

Corporacy is part of the second “great (global) transformation”—the industrial revolution that Polanyi analyzed is the first great transformation—as neoliberal globalization creates an almost miraculous development of capitalism and profound dislocations in the lives of ordinary people across the globe (Munck 2002, 3). What do corporacy and the ability of corporations to produce anything anywhere mean for Polanyi’s double-movement? As we have argued throughout this book, globalization has weakened nationally based movements such as labor unions, which have in the past served as a central force in the countermovement pushing for social legislation. Furthermore, globalization has frayed (or even broken) the social bonds between people and undermined their sense of community and their belief in the power of citizens to effect change (see Putnam 1996, 2000; Hertz 2001; Brecher, Costello, and Smith 2002). National governments are less and less fulfilling the basic role of providing public services such as trash collection, for instance. So what are the implications of these changes for the countermovement that has traditionally targeted national policy as a means to resolve social problems?

Although the state has become one of many global actors, we are not arguing that the state has *no* role in resolving local problems. To be sure, sovereign power has been transformed by globalization, but federal (national) and local (subnational) governments can still make a difference; thus, influence over government policy remains an important focus of struggle. Ultimately, control over corporations involves re-embedding the market through regulation and decommmodification, as Polanyi argued; today, however, this must occur at the national and the global levels.

Almost as it heeds the call to fulfill its appointed mission, the information infrastructure is being used by activists to take advantage of declining costs of transportation and to organize and strengthen transborder movements in opposition to dislocations caused by neoliberal globalization. The World

Social Forum and the International Forum on Globalization are only two examples of the nascent global countermovement, which is not only challenging neoliberal globalization but, in the process, constructing a global civil society.<sup>1</sup>

What constitutes a global civil society? A civil society exists whenever people mobilize social movements and/or voluntary associations to initiate change in the *national* or *local* social order. In a global civil society, people mobilize social movements and/or form voluntary associations to initiate change in the *global* social order (Scholte 2000a, 177). Specifically, a global civil society encompasses civic activity that (1) addresses transworld issues, (2) involves transborder communication, (3) has a global organization, and (4) works on the premise of suprataritorial solidarity (Scholte 2000a, 180–181). While the four characteristics often go hand-in-hand, many global civic associations do not have all of them (see Scholte 2000a, 180).

Why is civil society important? At the national level, civil society provides the basis for the development and maintenance of democratic and social-welfare institutions. If we reflect for a moment on how the democratic states of Europe were built, we find that rulers never willingly extended civil, political, or social rights to subjects; only through demands did the masses transform Europe's oligarchies into democracies and eventually into social welfare states. As the countermovement expands and a global civil society develops, pressure from below may transform the neoliberal global system and create a set of democratic global institutions capable of controlling transnational corporations and providing social support for the least powerful. In other words, just as nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century women and men had to mobilize through voluntary associations in protest at the national level to achieve voting rights, better working conditions, and social policies to improve their lives, people at the turn of the millennium are engaged in a similar effort on a global scale.

### Globalization and Its Countermovement

In the remainder of the chapter, we focus on a selection of organizations and groups that can be considered part of a budding global civil society—the global countermovement—and some of the diverse new tactics and strategies they are using to resolve local problems associated with globalization. Among these are *Agir pour les Femmes en Situation Péciaire* ("Acting for Women in Distressing Situations," AFESIP), which combats the global sex industry; living-wage campaigns in the United States, which are addressing wage and other community problems; consumer-advocacy campaigns in the United States, which are attempting to control the behavior of global corporations; and the Southeast Georgia Community Projects, which addresses the needs of Latinos in Georgia.

### Asian Sex Trafficking

AFESIP is a French global nongovernmental, nonpartisan, and nonreligious grassroots organization founded in 1996 and headquartered in Cambodia. It is devoted to "humanly correct development" and the "fight against the trafficking of women and children for sex slavery" (AFESIP 2004a, 3). Since its founding, AFESIP has developed an extensive anti-trafficking research-and-support network spanning the world from Spain to France to the United States to Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Working with governments, universities, institutes, and other nongovernmental organizations, AFESIP is creating social and legal structures that enhance official efforts to combat sex trafficking and slavery (AFESIP 2004c).

The activities of AFESIP cover all consequences of sex trafficking (AFESIP 2004a, 2004b). Specific programs in Southeast Asia include the legal and practical—such as rescue operations and safe houses—to support victims wishing to leave the sex industry; HIV/AIDS outreach; counseling and psychological treatment; family reunification, if viable; employment placement; and support for family income-generating opportunities.) The philosophical underpinnings of the organization are similar to the entrepreneurial literacy theory of the Brazilian Clodomir Santos de Moraes (2000), which emphasizes a "learning-by-doing" strategy to help individuals develop the capabilities necessary to more fully participate in society (see also Sobrado and Rojas 2004).<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the most important aspect of AFESIP's work is its reintegration program. With limited opportunities to acquire entrepreneurial skills and productive and economic resources, women often fall victim to sexual slavery through poverty and vulnerability. As AFESIP's Research unit's former Director Pierre Le Roux points out, the realities of rural Southeast Asia have transformed daughters into an important commodity for poor families (Aguilar 2005). Years of war and armed conflict, and more recently dislocations caused by free market policies, have caused severe social and economic devastation in this region. These circumstances have conspired to make the sex-trafficking industry a significant part of the region's economy. In view of these conditions—and the possibility of victims being retrafficked unless they develop skills to become self-sufficient—AFESIP emphasizes basic education, entrepreneurial literacy, and human and worker rights. Achieving sustainable financial independence begins with training in one of AFESIP's rehabilitation centers and a "business starting kit" that contains either in-kind or cash assistance that can be used to create income-generating activities. AFESIP also networks women with organizations that can provide additional support when needed.

AFESIP's fair trade business—called Fair Fashion—is one of its more ambitious programs. The idea behind Fair Fashion is to take advantage of globalization by creating links with global markets as a means to achieve greater autonomy and control for women and communities. Partnering with

the global fair-fade movement (the Fair Trade Federation and the International Federation for Alternative Trade), the Fair Fashion program is a skill-building and income-generating project that helps victims return to a "normal" life.<sup>4</sup> Women trained in AFESIP rehabilitation centers work in Fair Fashion garment-production facilities that produce high-quality products under the principles of fair trade (e.g., living wages, safe and hygienic working conditions, no child or forced labor, nondiscrimination policies, and so on). Currently, there are two programs. One, founded in February 2003, is located in rural Tloc Tchroeu (Kompong Cham Province), Cambodia. Currently, 16 women work in this center. A second center, started in June 2004 with five women, is in Saigon.

How successful has AFESIP been in combating sex slavery? Its Fair Fashion program provides on-the-job training in basic sewing skills and design, while AFESIP training seminars cover an array of issues from human rights to globalization, fair-trade, and gender issues to managing microbusinesses. Victims also have access to counselors and psychologists. Together, these programs create opportunities for self-development that lead to improved living standards and reduced dependence and vulnerability. Globally, AFESIP's research and information programs are raising awareness about the problem of trafficking and forging networks capable of combating trafficking.

Still, AFESIP faces many challenges, including the disparity between the region's poverty and the wealth and power of those running the sex industry as well as the inability or unwillingness of government officials to stop sex trafficking (this is often due to a lack of resources).<sup>5</sup> Equally problematic, in January 2005, the U.S. government began phasing out all quotas on textiles, which means that foreign exporters and U.S. importers will be free to export or import any textile products into the United States without having to worry about quantitative limitations, import licenses, or other special requirements. In addition, with its entrance into the World Trade Organization (WTO), China is dramatically increasing its share of total global textile exports. These two factors mean increasing competition for Fair Fashion products and an uncertain future for this project.

### **Challenging Corporate Power**

Incredible as it may sound, under U.S. law corporations have the legal status of "personhood," meaning that they enjoy the same protections as human beings under the U.S. Constitution.<sup>6</sup> With the reach of corporations spreading beyond the control of any one government and with the growing material inequities between corporations and most individuals, this legal definition takes on new meaning in the political process. As corporations increasingly pursue a global agenda and the ties between business and communities are severed (Rubin 1996, 53), enormous problems are created for communities. As we noted earlier, corporacy creates a pattern of control in which the federal government responds to the demands of big business and county and city

governments are increasingly responsible for those functions abdicated by the federal government. In this section, we look at forms of activism targeting the growth of corporate power and the challenge of bringing democratic control over corporations.

### **Living-Wage Campaigns**

Living-wage campaigns address the immediate local problems of declining wages and benefits and increased need for higher-paying jobs with the expansion of welfare-to-work programs. With the emergence of the neoliberal state, the traditional functions of the federal government are increasingly the responsibility of state and local governments. Less federal support for local governments, both fiscally and in terms of social programs, places immense political pressures on local officials (state, county, and city) to generate new sources of revenue and employment. Often, local elected officials resort to a policy of creating "jobs at any cost." It is not uncommon to see states or cities bid against each other to attract investment. Strategies include tax holidays, or the elimination of certain taxes for a set amount of time; "guarantees" of union-free workplaces; and the "temporary" suspension of workplace and environmental regulation, such as minimum wages. Unfortunately, these inducements do little to resolve the fiscal crisis of the local areas and generally create nonunion employment (which pays less and has fewer benefits) or low-wage service sector jobs that do little to resolve the problems of low incomes and poverty.

The ongoing battle against poverty and the growing ranks of the working poor have been intensified by the declining real value of the minimum wage. In 1969, if one member of a family of four held a full-time minimum-wage job, the family would subsist at approximately 10 percent below the poverty line; today, a family of four supported by a single minimum-wage job would fall into an income category 39 percent below the poverty line (Clawson 2003, 168). In constant 2000 dollars, the 1968 minimum wage would equal \$7.92 per hour and, if adjusted for inflation and productivity, it would equate to \$13.80 per hour (Clawson 2003, 168; Pollin and Luce 1998, 40). By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the average worker toiling at the federal minimum wage would have to work 66 hours a week and pay *no taxes* to bring his or her family of four up to the poverty line (Clawson 2003, 168–169).

The obvious and traditional remedy for this problem is for the federal government to raise the federal minimum wage. The level of the minimum wage, however, reflects the distribution of political power and not some neutral set of forces (see Clawson 2003). Not surprisingly, business people and their political allies respond to attempts to raise the floor under the lowest-paid workers with claims that increasing the minimum wage will inevitably augment inflationary pressures and job losses and cause grave damage to global competitiveness.

To combat these arguments, proponents of a "living wage" make the simple point that anyone working full time should earn enough to support a family at least at the poverty line. Indeed, recent survey data show that over 90 percent of those polled in the United States support this idea, agreeing with the statement that "people who work full time should be able to earn enough to keep their families out of poverty" (Ehrenreich 2001). The novelty of the living-wage approach makes these some of "the most interesting and underreported grassroots enterprises[ ] to emerge since the Civil Rights Movement," according to the editor of *The American Prospect*, Robert Kuttner (quoted in Unitarian Universalistic Service Committee 2005).

Living-wage campaigns arrived on the scene in 1994 and are innovative in two important respects. First, they target communities rather than minimum-wage or even low-wage workers in specific workplaces. A typical campaign will focus on enacting a city or county ordinance that covers city or county employees or employees of any company doing business within that city or county. Between 1994 and 2005, living-wage ordinances were enacted in over 130 cities or counties (Labor Studies Center 2003). These ordinances have established wage levels from \$6.25 to \$13.00 per hour, with wages generally indexed to inflation or the poverty level. Moreover, employers are often required to pay health benefits as part of a compensation package (Levi, Olson, and Steinman 2003). Second, these campaigns are forging networks and alliances among labor organizations, community-based organizations, clergy, and students that can pursue campaigns beyond wages to other quality-of-life issues. The broad spectrum of local groups that form living-wage coalitions is a significant change from past mobilizations. As David Reynolds (1999, 69–70) points out, groups in the past tended to focus on concerns unique to each one; consequently, they acted alone on specific issues or in smaller coalitions. Unions, for instance, fend off the latest concession demands from management; community groups for the poor battle against the harsh aspects of welfare reform; churches struggle to find resources to feed the hungry and house the homeless; students fight against the rising cost of education. Today, however, there is a growing awareness among these groups that they cannot go it alone. While not every campaign involves all of these groups, broader coalitions typically enjoy greater access to resources and a better chance of achieving their goal of "capacitating" individuals, or capacity building by empowering people to have greater control over their own destinies. By forging broader coalitions, the movement is establishing a basis for these movements to address more general community problems that are created by "jobs-at-any-cost" strategies.

*Labor:* Unions are often central players in these local campaigns for several reasons. Organized labor has long been involved in the struggle to raise wages and improve the working conditions of workers; yet, since the 1960s, unionization in the United States has declined from over 35 percent of private-sector workers to less than 8 percent today.

Many of the changes described in this book are responsible for the weakening of organized labor. Unions, however, remain relevant in today's globalized world, and living-wage campaigns provide an opportunity for labor to develop new organizing strategies and coalitions that may attract new members. The United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), for instance, has forged ties with community and environmental groups in its struggle against Wal-Mart (Iritani 2005b). A second example of extensive labor-community ties is the Justice for Janitors movement (Clawson 2003).

*Religion:* Faith-based organizations are active in living-wage campaigns for many of the same reasons as labor. These campaigns offer opportunities for recruiting and retaining members by showing the relevance of the church to people's daily struggles. Equally important, living-wage campaigns directly engage the moral claims of adequate wages and benefits (Kazin 1999). Rabbinical students, Muslims, and born-again Christians alike express concerns that workers "made in the image of God" are not being treated that way or are "pushed so hard" that they do not have the time to "lead an abundant life" (Simon 2005). The role of churches and synagogues in addressing labor and community issues is neither new nor unusual. Bishop Bernard J. Sheil, for instance, offered support to John L. Lewis's attempts to organize steelworkers in 1938. In the 1960s and 1970s, Cesar Chavez drew moral and practical support from the Catholic Church while organizing the United Farm Workers in California, and Reverend Martin Luther King was working with sanitation workers and poor people before he was killed in 1968 (Simon 2005, Levy 1975).

*Community Organizations:* Margaret Levi, David Olson, and Erich Steinman (2003) argue that community organizations bring vital resources, strategies, and energy to a coalition. At the same time, they lack the legitimacy and institutionalized structure of churches or the legal claim of unions to represent workers. Community organizations are often created by residents who have few other avenues for seeking redress to their problems, and their legitimacy stems from successfully mobilizing the community to achieve desired changes. Although the early history of the living-wage campaigns of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and the Association of Community Organization for Reform Now (ACORN) did not involve unions, there is recognition that better working and living conditions and prospects for long-term change can only be accomplished through joint partnerships and a mutual commitment of resources (Levi, Olson, and Steinman 2003). Thus, community organizations forge alliances with other organizations to address basic quality-of-life issues. For instance, the IAF and Valley Interfaith came together in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas to bring running water, sewers, electricity, and paved roads to *colonias*.<sup>7</sup>

The coalition's philosophy of capacity building, leadership development, and "learning by doing" not only accomplished its immediate goals but has helped to give these communities an ongoing voice in local politics (Putman, Feldstein, and Cohen 2003, Chapter 1).

*Students:* Since the 1990s, students have served as a key force in the movement focused on confronting corporate power, most visibly the student anti-sweatshop movement that grew out of the public disclosures in the mid-1990s that Gap apparel, Kathie Lee Gifford's Wal-Mart clothing line, and Nike shoes were being produced by girls as young as 13 in Asia and Latin America.

From the beginning, the anti-sweatshop movement has been a student-labor coalition. Groups such as the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees, or UNITE, provide organizational, strategic, and financial resources to local student groups. The movement's origins date from the years 1997–1998 when students from Duke, Harvard, Illinois, and Georgetown spent the summer at the AFL-CIO's Summer Labor Organizing Program. Students traveled to Central America to witness the conditions under which apparel was produced for the U.S. market and, over the next few years, organized the United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS). By 2001, USAS had mounted campaigns on over 200 U.S. university and college campuses.

More recently, students associated with the anti-sweatshop campaigns have initiated actions focusing on the wages and working conditions of service workers on their campuses. Similar to the USAS strategy of directly connecting activists with workers, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees union (AFSCME) began pairing students with janitors to work side-by-side on night shifts at several universities. As students began to experience firsthand what it means to be a low-wage worker on their campuses, living-wage campaigns sprung up on over 30 campuses, including the largest private employer in Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, as well as Harvard, Fairfield, and Wesleyan Universities (Clawson 2003, 180–181).

Similar to the living-wage movement, these are limited campaigns that focus on service workers—janitors and food-service workers—at universities. The story is by now a familiar one: to cut costs, universities use private companies that subcontract workers who receive lower pay and fewer benefits than if the university had directly hired the workers. The idea driving the university-based living-wage campaigns, then, is to win an agreement (in some cases, a union with a contract) with the university that any worker hired directly or indirectly through a subcontractor would receive a certain level of benefits. Generally, these include a living wage, safe working conditions, minimal job security, among other benefits negotiated directly with university officials or indirectly on the part of the union (see Clawson 2003, 180–187).

Still, if ordinances narrowly target cities, communities, or universities, are they simply symbolic victories in the battle against corporate power? The answer to this question is not so simple. To be sure, these campaigns are limited in the number of workers they cover; however, social change is often about *perception*, and small—even symbolic—victories are important placing new ideas on the table for discussion. Living-wage victories also begin to raise the bar for companies and industries not covered that may create opportunities for more extensive organizing attempts (see Clawson 2001, Chapter 6). By raising the wages of the lowest-paid workers, for instance, these campaigns put pressure on higher wage levels and counter the existing jobs-at-any-cost strategy that is central to the present form of globalization.

Furthermore, living-wage campaigns do not reflect politics as usual. They are intended to supplement or replace the supervision and control of employer-employee relations by the federal, state, and court system with one that emphasizes community activism, community control, and mass mobilization (see Clawson 2003, 170–171). These coalitions are targeting local government officials to respond to the problem of employment and poverty in ways that previous movements pressured the federal government. This requires the creation and deepening of social networks among residents within and across different organizations and groups, as well as with local government officials and agencies, to ensure the ongoing monitoring and enforcement of ordinances. In effect, these groups are building community from the bottom up by creating social networks that can be utilized for community project beyond the workplace.

If these campaigns fail to reach out and mobilize low-wage workers and community residents, however, they will likely suffer from the same limitations as other movements that drive change "from above." Clawson (2003) identifies some of these pitfalls in a recent justice-for-janitors living-wage campaign at Wesleyan University that, while successfully winning a contract tended to reproduce patterns of dependence on the part of the university workers. In this case, the organizing strategy did not fully or adequately integrate the workers into the process. Students often took action on behalf of the workers; the workers in turn tended to look toward the students for guidance on priorities and strategies. Because they were not fully incorporated into the organizing process, workers were never empowered to effectively carry on the struggle without the organizers. The case is suggestive. I movements are to successfully challenge neoliberal globalization, people need to be empowered to take control of their lives and circumstances over the long run. Yet, without concrete short-term results, the organizational effort may never get off the ground. The fundamental lesson, and one echoed in the experiences of the above IAF and Valley Interfaith campaigns in south Texas is to empower people in the process of devising solutions to their immediate problems so that they develop the capacity to "defend themselves and exercise power tomorrow and the day after" (Clawson 2003, 166–167; also Carmel and Sobrado 2000).

### Consumer-Advocacy Movements

Consumer advocacy is another movement addressing growing corporate power. Here, the strategy is to harness market forces as a mechanism to reward or punish global corporations and thereby alter corporate behavior. Consumer movements and consumer activism have a long history, and the contemporary form continues in the spirit of protecting consumers from big business. Today, however, the challenge is broader—consumer groups also attempt to protect workers by compelling companies to adopt corporate codes of conduct. *Codes of conduct* are formal statements of the values and business practices of a corporation that may include sections on wages and working conditions, child labor, the environment, and so on.<sup>8</sup> The idea is to use codes to establish and protect the basic rights of workers in situations where unions and state regulations are either weak or nonexistent.

Codes, however, only specify appropriate behavior, and there are no formal mechanisms through which codes can be enforced. How then can the consumer-advocacy movement ensure that company behavior is consistent with codes of conduct? The key, according to Naomi Klein (2000a, 2000b, 2001), lay in the significance of corporate brands. The notion of brands came about during the industrial revolution as an attempt to create individuality within a production process of sameness (Klein 2000a)—sugar is sugar, but only C&H is “pure cane sugar.” In other words, identical products had to be differentiated from each other, and brands became the mechanism to identify the superiority of one product over another.

With globalization, brands as a means of differentiating products evolved into a process through which *individuals* differentiate themselves. This is the notion of branding (Klein 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Quart 2004). Although branding often refers to advertising, Klein (2000a) argues that branding is in reality more ominous. It is a process through which individuals—even public spaces—become linked to corporations as a way of defining themselves (or the space). Branding goes beyond advertising to the selling of a lifestyle; with branding, brands are no longer an add-on to a company’s existence but the reason for its existence. Today, corporations are locked in a struggle to achieve a greater market share in highly competitive global markets where goods are produced not by them but by the same nameless subcontractors. In other words, with globalization, fewer companies are producing things and more are producing images. Nike, for instance, does not produce shoes and Dell does not make computers; their work lay not in manufacturing but in marketing a lifestyle, a look, a culture.

Branding is ubiquitous, and in this age of lower taxes and shrinking social programs, where communities and schools are ever more pressed to find sufficient resources, branding is insidious. We have 3Com Park in San Francisco, Staple’s Center in Los Angeles, Quest Field in Seattle, Coors Field in Colorado, and FedEx Field for the Washington Redskins. Increasingly, school districts are looking to the private sector for funds, which results in

the branding of schools. Pepsi, Coke, McDonalds, Nike, Procter & Gamble, Toyota, and Microsoft are only a few corporations that provide advice, functional and managerial support to help children develop basic skills and education (Hertz 2001, 173). This is what Klein (2000a) calls “the branding of learning” (p. 173). The question few are asking in this new age of public–private partnering is what extent are these genuine public service programs or innovative ways “brand” children in the quest for a greater market share; moreover, if these needs of a democratic society clash with those of corporations, whose interests will prevail?

Branding is not only about what happens “out there.” Individuals are branded as they increasingly define themselves by their possessions (Quart 2004, 43–45). Stop for a moment and think about what you wear and who you are. Are you branded by Nike, Reebok, or Payless; do you drive a Mercedes-Benz, a BMW, or a Hyundai? Consumption of the “right” brands no longer reflects the quality of the company or product but the “quality” and “value” of the individual. Even a person’s identity (or quality as a human being) is determined by the brands she or he consumes; sure, brands have long signified one’s social position, but this has taken on a completely new meaning today’s world. Thus, buying Nike or a BMW is not about a shoe or a car but the image we wish to project to the public about our attitude, philosophy, quality, and values.

The importance of corporate brands and logos in the highly competitive global system creates social and psychological problems, but enormous potential as well (Klein 2000a, 2001). Brand reputation is paramount for corporations. Advocacy groups can use brand supremacy to enforce codes by monitoring corporate adherence and by exposing violators through print, radio and visual media, and the Internet, as well as through protests and leafleting (see Mandle 2000, Alpert 2002, Conroy 2002, Ross 2004). The threat of a consumer backlash is real, and rebuilding a damaged brand is costly; thus, companies will go to great lengths to avoid negative publicity (Hertz 2001, 118–129).

Have these campaigns proved successful? Again, there is no easy answer. Data, for instance, show an increase in consumer activism and value influenced buying behavior throughout the world since 1995 (Hertz 2002, 210).<sup>9</sup> By the 1990s, images of “children bowed over workbenches, or adults crammed thirty at a time into squalid dormitories . . . stitching sneakers, foot balls, and sweatshirts that we wear and play with” troubled many consumers (Hertz 2001, 117–118). This has meant, according to Noreena Hertz (2002, 127), “a substantial increase not only in the number of multinationals that now have codes of conduct (*all* Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. do), but also in those now willing to undergo an audit of their environmental, and to a lesser extent social, policies.”

Along with the effects of student anti-sweatshop campaigns on college and university campuses,<sup>10</sup> public protests against Nike produced a significant and well-publicized change in the company’s policies. Today, Nike allows independent monitoring of its factories and, as of spring 2005, has made pub-

the location of the factories producing its products. This is an important victory for the consumer-advocacy movement; as long as factory locations remain secret, it is nearly impossible to monitor corporate behavior.<sup>10</sup>

Other consumer actions in the 1990s caused manufacturers of soccer balls to change policy and to add labels certifying the product as "child labor-free." In 2000, Starbucks executives signed a letter of intent with TransFair USA, a "fair-trade" certification organization, to certify that its fair-trade coffee would be produced under fair-trade conditions (e.g., long-term contracts offering higher wages than the going global market rate). Consumer-advocacy groups have successfully convinced the major do-it-yourself lumberyards, as well as Kinkos', The Gap, and other companies, to stop buying products from "old growth" forests and to give preference to products produced through sustainable forest practices (Conroy 2002). Greenpeace International has persuaded refrigerator maker Whirlpool Corporation to use environmentally friendly insulation, and The Gap and Nike have collaborated with labor advocates to clean up sweatshops in Cambodia (Iritani 2005a). Sister Ruth Rosenbaum, founder of the Center for Reflection, Education, and Action, an antipoverty group based in Hartford, Connecticut, summed up the consumer-advocacy movement this way: "When we first started working on codes of conduct back in the 1990s, this was kind of like way out there, now, it is absolutely normal for a company to have a code of conduct" (Iritani 2005a).

Still, it is not clear whether these examples illustrate fundamental change or if they are corporate marketing ploys equivalent to "window dressing."

If these campaigns are to create long-term change, several conditions need to be present: *transparency* on the part of the company, *monitoring* of corporate behavior on the part of an independent advocacy group, and *informed consumers* with access to a variety of merchandise. This is a *demand-driven market* process requiring that advocacy groups have reasonably free access to company factories and the capability to expose violations to a large number of consumers. Moreover, consumers must care enough to change their buying habits. Absent these conditions, violators will be unlikely to suffer in the marketplace and the strategy will fail.

In the end, however, these movements are not substitutes for unions or community-level participation in the countries where factories are located.

Consumer-advocacy groups can harness the market power of consumers to create codes as a means to halt abuses against workers—and to support fair-trade products—but it is difficult for an organization in one country to effectively monitor and enforce company behavior in another. Furthermore, subcontracting makes it exceedingly difficult to monitor compliance by rendering producers invisible to outside observers. This means that consumer-advocacy groups need to work on "globalizing" trade union rights that can support the growth of local unions that can serve as allies in the quest for higher wages and better working conditions in producing countries (see Mandle 2000).<sup>11</sup>

## Immigration and Empowerment in the Deep South

### Southeast Georgia Community Project

The Southeast Georgia Community Project (SEGCP), in Lyons, Georgia, is one of the local grass-roots organizations that form part of an emerging global civil society. Unlike states with a long history of Latino immigration, such as California or Texas, Georgia has few organizations capable of meeting the needs of a burgeoning Spanish-speaking population. The absence of bilingual and bicultural resources and organizations committed to meeting the needs of the Latino community effectively renders Latinos invisible to the mainstream society. Examples abound of mothers being told in Spanish by telephone that their baby did not survive childbirth or of minor traffic violations that resulted in overnight jail time—or longer—because no one could explain the problem (or the person's rights) in Spanish.

These problems are compounded by the more general issues of stratification. According to the report "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2005," Latino children are less likely than other children to have health insurance or to receive recommended vaccinations. The report also found that Latino children are more likely to live in poverty. Another study showed that Latinos in Georgia have the lowest graduation rates in the country—a rate of 32 percent compared with 54 percent nationwide (Greene 2002). These data provide a partial picture of the challenges SEGCP faces.

Andrea Cruz founded the community-based SEGCP in 1994 to meet the health, social, legal, and economic needs of the Latino farmworker community in southeast Georgia. Based on a philosophy of empowerment similar to that of the Brazilians Paolo Freire and Clodomir Santos de Moraes, the organization emphasizes dialogue and "learning-by-doing." The goal is to promote human dignity through self-empowerment in order to reduce dependence and create the basis for active community participation. By building bridges among immigrant farmworkers, farmers, local citizens, local service providers, and legal advocates, SEGCP is educating the Anglo, Latino, and black communities about each other.<sup>12</sup>

Decisions on how SEGCP should prioritize the range of social problems confronting the Latino community emerge from an ongoing dialogue

among the various communities. These discussions have produced an array of programs and projects that include cultural-sensitivity workshops for local (non-Latino) health personnel, English classes, health and HIV/AIDS education, assistance in filling out citizenship applications, as well as programs that provide emergency food and clothing assistance. SEGCP has also developed a network of interpreters and health-care workers for its prenatal education program and to conduct follow-up home visits to new migrant farmworker mothers. Youth projects include antitobacco and antigang projects and domestic violence-prevention programs. By cultivating networks between health providers and the Latino community, SEGCP serves a vital role in bringing health care to the Latino community. Finally, as a means to maintain contact with the mobile farmworker community, SEGCP produces a Spanish-language radio program with a public-service emphasis.

As with many community-based organizations, SEGCP reflects a trend of citizens organizing themselves to take on problems government officials cannot or will not confront. The emergence and growth of SEGCP is a positive example of what can be accomplished by community activists possessed of conviction and creativity even when the odds are stacked against them.<sup>13</sup> The emphasis on promoting English and computer literacy, leadership skills, and health provides the basic enabling (capacity building) conditions for empowering residents to become more active in their communities. Through dialogue and community participation in local churches, schools, and businesses, Latinos can devise germane, applicable solutions to community problems consistent with their needs and create opportunities for upward social mobility for themselves and their children.<sup>14</sup>

### Building Community Through Creating Social Capital

The effects of stratification and the importance of social networks are two recurring themes in all these cases. As we discussed in Chapter 5, class and status stratification matter because of the *consequences* of unequal distributions of wealth, income, and power. We have touched on some of these throughout the book, including access to health, education, and good jobs. The scope of these problems means that transforming our communities into livable spaces will require cooperation among members of disparate communities and between these communities and government agencies. Yet, as we noted in Chapter 4, globalization and global processes are undermining a sense of community by atomizing individuals and reducing the role of government in people's lives. Given these conditions, any solution will require that we rebuild our communities *from below*, that we recreate—or, in many cases, create—community-level social bonds between people through the kinds of efforts we have discussed in this chapter.

The groups described here are actively forging networks and coalitions to address the immediate problems created by globalization. By networks and

coalitions, we are really talking about social capital, or the trust and social norms that govern reciprocity, sharing of resources, and other features of social organization—that is, networks, coalitions, and mutual assistance and even social norms which set boundaries on the levels of inequality that society tolerates (see Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993, 1996, 2000; Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen 2003; Portes 1998; Light and Gold 2000; Santos Morais 2000; Hytrek and Sobrado 2002; Krugman 2002; Sobrado and Roj 2004). Social capital is something distinct from physical capital (tools) or human capital (education); unlike these forms of capital, social capital *increases* rather than *decreases*, through use. In other words, the supply of social capital will be depleted if not used (Hirschman cited in Putnam 1993, 16). Illustrations of social capital include the social networks and coalitions developed to pass living-wage ordinances, to monitor and enforce corporate codes of conduct, and to promote Latino health and literacy in Georgia.

Putnam (1996) and Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen (2003) argue that communities with greater social capital also tend to be more livable. In the communities, residents have access to more resources and a capacity for self-organization and participation that enhances the chances for upward social mobility. We saw this in Georgia, where SEGCP's networks are connecting Latino and Anglo communities and improving the Latino population's access to resources. In many ways, SEGCP has made existing governmental organizations more effective by serving as a bridge between the Spanish- and English-speaking communities and public agencies. The construction of social networks is also critical to the operation of AFESIP, which is collaborating with nongovernmental organizations, activists, and scholars to share resources and information and to develop solutions to the global problem of sex trafficking. Similarly, living-wage campaigns and consumer-advocacy groups address the unequal distribution of power between communities as big business by forging community-based coalitions. In each case, activists are creating bonding social capital by tightening the links among members of the immediate (e.g., Latino) group as well as bridging social capital across different groups (e.g., religious, labor, student, environmental, class and ethnic and racial groups). The latter, as you might expect, is the most difficult to build and the most important for creating livable and democratic communities.

While these networks are essential to the long-term health of our communities, the aforementioned groups did not set out to build social capital. The immediate intent was to address a lack of jobs and opportunities, to provide access to health care, and to bring to individuals some control over the direction of change. Nonetheless, the result has been to create bonds between people within and across groups and, with them, the possibility for healthier communities. The lesson we can derive from these examples is that creating communities with greater opportunities for upward social mobility does not rest exclusively on the individual assets of community members, nor does it rest exclusively on the unequal distribution of physical and human capital an insurmountable

obstacle; the success of these communities depends on the quantity and distribution of social capital networks.

### Conclusion

With globalization altering the traditional role of the nation-state, we are left with a vision of globalization as a set of inevitable global forces wreaking havoc on the lives of ordinary and defenseless people and communities (Sklair 1999, 158). While the role of the nation-state has indeed changed, we explored in this chapter how “ordinary and defenseless people” are organizing themselves, building community as part of Polanyi’s countermovement, and challenging governments to address basic community needs. What we have seen are groups pressuring *different levels* of government to resolve local problems, from AFESIP’s targeting national governments to halt sex-based trafficking to living-wage campaigns focusing on city and county governments to SEGCOP’s pressuring community professionals and officials to address local ethnic-based inequality.

Often labeled “antiglobalization,” they cannot be reduced to such a simplistic phrase; these groups do not romanticize a mythical preglobalization “good old days” but employ creative strategies in the active pursuit of solutions to local problems within the context of globalization. Furthermore, globalization is not the primary concern of these groups; rather, their goals are to bring better-paying jobs to neighborhoods and to ensure that people have access to health care, education, and clean communities in the United States and abroad. Even though globalization is not the target, their efforts are transforming the very nature of globalization.

Like Polanyi, many within these groups see laissez-faire free-market globalization as destructive to humanity and nature. Neoliberal globalization has produced incredible wealth and brought jobs to communities sorely lacking employment opportunities. Still, we need to ask under what conditions and at what cost? We have seen wealth rapidly and obscenely concentrated in the hands of a few, ecological devastation, families thrown into poverty because of low-paying jobs, and communities reduced to the places they merely occupy. These are the predictable results of elite-driven change and the idolization of free markets. Markets are not infallible and the failure of neoliberal globalization to widely deliver benefits to those on the bottom of the stratification hierarchy, and increasingly to those in the middle, has engendered a diverse countermovement.

In the end, we might ask ourselves what these groups have achieved. While we have discussed some of their accomplishments in this chapter, perhaps the most significant aspect is the forging of a global network that may be capable of confronting the global reach of powerful individuals and corporations. Above all, the groups that are part of the countermovement attest to the widespread belief in, and moreover the *possibility* of, making positive social

change. There are thousands of individuals across the United States and the world who are educating us, informing us, and infecting us with their optimism for a better world. So is there any hope for the poor? As the groups described in this chapter continue their struggles consciously and even unintentionally against neoliberal globalization, there may yet be hope, not only for the poor, but for all of humanity.