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DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER

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Discordant Cooperation

Reinventing Globalization to Reduce Gender Inequality

Robert O. Keohane

Susan Moller Okin was outraged about gender inequality. It engaged her intellectually and deeply moved her emotionally. During the last phase of her career, she shifted her attention from gender inequality in the rich countries to the even greater injustices inflicted on women as a result of gender inequality in poor countries. As she did everywhere, she questioned orthodoxy, both the orthodoxy of neoliberal economics and the orthodoxy of multiculturalism. My emphasis in this chapter will be on her engagement with the political economy of gender and development and with the effects of globalization on women.

In January 2004, Okin spent two weeks in India with the Global Fund for Women and attended the World Social Forum. In her published writings and in private correspondence, she emphasized a number of ways in which economic globalization and policies of neoliberalism have been bad for women in developing countries.¹ But she also recognized the other side of the coin: that social globalization—the diffusion of ideas and the operation of social movements on a global basis—can promote feminist social criticism and gender equality. In a paper published in 1999, she said, “There are some aspects of globalization that, far from endangering democracy, present new opportunities for democratic participation and popular influence to emerge and to affect international law-making.”² She and her coauthor, Brooke Ackerly, mentioned

This chapter is dedicated to the memory of Susan Moller Okin, who was my colleague at Brandeis University in the early 1980s and a dear friend for over 22 years; it was originally written for a conference in her honor in February 2005. I am particularly indebted to Brooke Ackerly and Tamar Gutner for their extensive and detailed critical comments on earlier versions of this chapter. I am also grateful to Ruth Grant, Jane Jaquette, Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, Nan Keohane, Jane J. Mansbridge, and the editors of this volume for helpful comments on later versions. Unfortunately, I have not been able to update my analysis with research on the directions taken by the World Bank during the presidency of Paul Wolfowitz (2005–2007).

1. Even successful economic development, as conventionally defined, can have negative effects on the work burdens and autonomy of women, and it can have different effects on different sets of women. See Boserup 1990.

2. Brooke Ackerly and Susan Moller Okin, “Feminist Social Criticism and the International Movement for Women’s Rights as Human Rights,” in Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón, eds., *Democracy’s Edges* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 134.

population mobility, improved means of long-distance communication, global media, the transnational spread of ideas, and the activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

In this chapter, I seek to honor Susan Okin's deep commitment to gender equality and her contribution to thinking about these issues by asking whether globalization could be "reinvented" in a way that would help to promote gender equality in developing countries. At the most general level, my argument is that feminist social movements would be wise not to reject globalization but to use the opportunities provided by it to promote gender equality. These opportunities will require institutional involvement: institutional leadership and institutional change will be necessary for significant progress on this set of issues to be made.

More specifically, feminists will need to engage with the World Bank, since the bank is the only large global multilateral institution with the capacity to provide such leadership. Under the presidency of James Wolfensohn, who left office in 2005, the bank showed itself to be more open to change than some other global institutions. The argument of this chapter is that feminist social movements and NGOs should engage with the World Bank while maintaining a healthy critical distance from it. As of mid-2008, the Bank was recovering, under the presidency of Robert Zoellick, from a period of controversy and disarray during the presidency of Paul Wolfowitz. It is possible that the next few years will be an auspicious time for feminist activists to press their agenda on a new Bank leadership that is anxious to rebuild constituencies for its work.

In using the term, "gender," I follow Susan Okin's definition: "the deeply entrenched institutionalization of sexual difference."³ The central problem that Okin analyzed was how the institutionalization of sexual difference led to economic and political inequality, to the disadvantage of women. Practices deeply embedded in specific organizations privilege men over women directly through discrimination and indirectly through rewarding roles traditionally performed by men or by making demands (such as time-related demands to work) that cannot be met by people with responsibility for the care of small children, who are usually women. Institutions—in the broader sense of persistent social practices and norms—also perpetuate gendered stereotypes. Studies of institutions involved in rural development in poor countries demonstrate that, as Anne Marie Goetz writes, "institutions do not just passively mirror gender differences in social organization; they also *produce* gender differentiation through their structures and in their everyday practices."⁴

Institutions shape behavior by structuring incentives, as well as by furnishing taken-for-granted norms, which people may accept even when they are highly disadvantageous to them. Political power is at the heart of both incentive systems and norms. Empowered people create incentive systems, typically to advantage themselves and people like them, and build normative structures that suit their own beliefs and practices. If these systems generate inequality through gender differentiation, only the

3. Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic, 1989), 6 (hereafter *JGF*).

4. Anne Marie Goetz, ed., "Introduction," in *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development* (London: Zed, 1997), 12; see also World Bank, *Engendering Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

empowerment of people with different interests and different subjective values is likely to change their systematic bias. Empowerment is therefore at the heart of any strategy to reduce gender inequality.

In choosing the phrase “reinventing globalization,” I am indebted to thematic statements by Alison Symington in describing the 2002 triennial meeting of the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID).⁵ Symington begins with a standard academic definition of globalization: “a stretching of social, political and economic activities across frontiers such that events, decisions and activities that take place in one region can have significance for people in other regions.”⁶ The author argues that neoliberal versions of economic globalization are harmful to women. But promoting a romantic vision of self-reliance is not the answer:

Would we not be passing up our most strategic tools by disregarding the avenues of communication and interaction opened up by internet, satellite and transportation developments, the accountability mechanisms created by doctrines of universal jurisdiction in criminal, human rights and humanitarian law, and the new employment and education opportunities now available to so many women around the world?⁷

It will be clear from this chapter that I regard contemporary, deeply entrenched patterns of gender inequality as profoundly unjust. These unacceptable inequalities constitute a major reason that globalization needs to be reinvented, rather than merely redirected in incremental ways. But the reinvention of globalization does not necessarily mean insisting on radical changes in the structure of global capitalism. We can all imagine a more equitable system than the current one, in which access to capital and markets is controlled by relatively small elites, heavily male and mostly based in rich countries. In that sense, many of us find ourselves profoundly unsympathetic to global capitalism, as Susan Okin certainly did. However, it would only be worthwhile to insist on radical changes—rejecting reformism—if a better alternative system seemed feasible.

State socialism has failed to generate either sustained economic growth or freedom, and other potential political-economic systems have not been tried on a large scale. Furthermore, the fact that China and India have renounced socialism and have embraced their own forms of capitalism removes any major point of opposition to capitalism in the world system. Even if a radically transformed system of global production and exchange were feasible, it is hard for me to imagine that it could be implemented within our lifetimes.

5. The Association for Women’s Rights in Development is a 5,000-member transnational network of activists, supported by funding from the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Institute (www.awid.org). All documents and all budgetary figures cited in this chapter can be found on the Web sites of the relevant organizations, which are listed in the bibliography.

6. Quoted from David Held and Anthony McGrew, *The Global Transformation Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), 54.

7. Alison Symington, “Re-Inventing Globalization for Women’s Rights and Development,” in *Reinventing Globalization: Highlights of AWID’s 9th International Forum on Women’s Rights in Development* (2002). Available at www.awid.org (accessed October 11, 2004).

One does not, therefore, need to be “for global capitalism” to view reformist projects of reinventing globalization as more attractive than simply protesting against the ills generated by capitalism. Reformist projects keep their focus on the plight of poor women who are suffering injustice today. Advocates of such projects accept trade-offs, some of which may be morally ambiguous, since they involve working with relatively sympathetic institutions and groups *within* the system of global capitalism, whose values are unlikely fully to match those of the advocates. Reformists emphasize the consequences of their actions as much as the purity of their intentions. They eschew adopting a lofty moral purity, which is ethically problematic when the putatively pure individuals are sheltered from the effects of failure by their own situations of privilege.

However, to merit the phrase “reinventing globalization,” reformist projects cannot merely be palliatives, which help particular individuals or groups while leaving unjust structures of oppression intact. Reinventing globalization to reduce gender inequality requires the *empowerment* of women as a key aspect of any genuine reform. Merely using women instrumentally as a means of economic development, or even poverty reduction, is not reformist but conservative. That is, emphasis must be placed on women’s agency—giving women at all levels, from public policy making to household—the ability to participate in and to make important decisions.⁸

The World Bank, like other large organizations in contemporary society, is deeply implicated in the institutionalization of gender differentiation, and it has a mixed record of effectively promoting development. Its ambitions, and sometimes its claims, have been so great that it has been the object of much severe criticism.⁹ Nevertheless, under Wolfensohn, the bank reached a higher level of organizational awareness of issues of gender and development than that of most governments. Problems of global inequality and failed development are too deep to expect sudden and dramatic improvements; and in any case, large public bureaucracies such as the bank move slowly. But in my view, the World Bank is a potential resource that feminists should take seriously.

This chapter therefore takes global capitalism as a given and the World Bank as a potentially progressive force. It asks: how can the strategies of NGOs and social movements toward the World Bank help to reinvent globalization in ways that would empower women and reduce gender inequalities? As a student of world politics, I do not expect such strategies to generate harmony on major issues with serious distributional implications. On the contrary, discord is the prevalent condition of world politics: never-ending contention among advocates of different values and interests, competing in a realm that lacks authoritative governmental institutions. Yet, sometimes, cooperation emerges out of discord.¹⁰ I am looking in this chapter for the potential sources

8. Brooke Ackerly, “What’s in a Design? The Effects of NGO Programme Delivery Choices on Women’s Empowerment in Bangladesh,” in Goetz, ed., *Getting Institutions Right for Women*, 140–158.

9. Jonathan R. Pincus and Jeffrey A. Winters, eds., *Reinventing the World Bank* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

10. Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

of cooperation between feminist social movements and the World Bank that could emerge from the prevalent patterns of discord.¹¹

THE MORAL UNACCEPTABILITY OF CONTEMPORARY POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

I am not a political philosopher, so I do not pretend to be engaging in the sort of applied moral philosophy that Susan Okin pursued so effectively. On the contrary, for the sake of my argument here, I take as given her moral philosophy as a grounding for the more positive empirical exercise of this chapter. She accepted much of the egalitarian liberalism expressed in the works of John Rawls, but with two major qualifications. First, she demonstrated in her work over 15 years that major contemporary formulations of such philosophies, such as those of Rawls, have failed to extend their principles of distributive justice to the family.¹² Second, she was unwilling to limit the application of liberal principles of justice, especially as they apply to women, to Western democracies.¹³ To her, gender inequality was unacceptable anywhere, and particularly onerous in poor countries since it affects poor women who lack well-being in the most fundamental sense: they are unable to feed, clothe, and provide shelter for themselves and their children.¹⁴

Okin read widely and deeply in the empirical literature on development and inequality in poor countries. She emphasized the failures of overall growth and argued that income inequality has been increasing. Without engaging in detailed analyses of empirical patterns of growth and inequality, or necessarily agreeing with all of her interpretations of trends, I will try here to sketch a picture that demonstrates that her moral concern about these issues was justified.

Aggregate economic growth in gross domestic product (GDP) per head worldwide has been extraordinary during the postwar period. In constant dollars, calculated on the basis of purchasing power parity, global GDP rose over seven times between 1950 and 2000, and per capita income tripled during that time. But growth has been very uneven: in the 1973–1998 period, annual per capita growth was estimated at 3.54

11. These arguments are obviously contestable. Susan Okin had more sympathy than I do for projects of radical change, although she was certainly aware of the pitfalls. If she were still alive, she would surely subject my arguments to her critical scrutiny.

12. Susan Okin, "Justice and Gender: An Unfinished Debate," *Fordham Law Review* 72 (2004): 1537–1567; *JGF*.

13. Susan Okin, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?" in Joshua Cohen, Matthew Howard, and Martha Nussbaum, eds., *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); compare John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

14. Susan Okin, "Poverty, Well-Being and Gender: What Counts, Who's Heard?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 31.3 (Summer 2003): 280–316. This article was critical of Martha Nussbaum's argument in her *Women and Human Development* (2000), but Okin and Nussbaum both believed in the universal applicability of liberal democratic values, and both emphasized that institutional practices need to be fundamentally changed so that women can exercise more autonomy in their lives. To a nonphilosopher, therefore, their positions seem relatively similar to one another despite their differences over such issues as whether to emphasize rights or capabilities.

percent in the developing countries of Asia, but effectively zero (0.01 percent) in Africa. As the Growth Commission of the World Bank recently reported:

This accelerating growth has created new challenges. The first is a clear divergence in incomes within and between countries. Of the roughly 6 billion people on the planet, about 65 percent live in high-income or high-growth economies, up from less than a fifth 30 years ago. The remaining 2 billion people live in countries with stagnating, or even declining, incomes. The world population is projected to increase by 3 billion people by 2050. Unfortunately, 2 billion of this extra population will live in countries that are currently enjoying little or no growth. Thus, if these trends persist, the proportion of the world population living in low-growth environments might increase.¹⁵

Poverty has fallen since 1970. Using a poverty standard of \$1 per day, the World Bank argues that poverty rates fell from 29 percent in 1990 to 24 percent in 1998.¹⁶ Most of this progress was due to great advances in India and China; poverty in Africa may have increased, and extreme poverty (income of less than \$1 per day) afflicts 46 percent of the population. By World Bank estimates, 1.2 billion people still lived in poverty in 1998. With respect to inequality, all estimates are controversial, and conclusions depend heavily on technical measurement decisions, for instance, whether to use exchange rates or purchasing power parity measurements of income, whether to count each country equally or weight countries by population, and whether to rely on aggregate national accounts or population surveys. Prudent conclusions would be that inequality is enormous in the world; that during the period since decolonization it has not been falling rapidly; and that both inequality and changes in inequality vary enormously by country and region.¹⁷

Battles still rage about the impact of neoliberal development strategies and about the role of the World Bank in promoting growth.¹⁸ Our knowledge of the complex combinations of conditions that promote or retard sustained economic development remains seriously deficient. There are notable success stories, especially in Asia, and clear failures, notably in Africa. Unfortunately, it is clear that countries with extensive International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) programs have not done well: as Okin pointed out, “for the twelve countries that received fifteen or more WB or

15. Commission on Growth and Development of the World Bank, “The Growth Report,” by Michael Spence et al., 2008. Available at www.growthcommission.org. See also Martin Wolf, *Why Globalization Works* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 107.

16. World Bank, *World Development Report* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000–2001), 23.

17. “The big story here is not change, but lack of it. The distribution of income across nations remained remarkably stable over a period of substantial income growth in the world [1960–1989].” Glenn Firebaugh, “Empirics of World Income Inequality,” *American Journal of Sociology* 104.6 (May 1999): 1597–1630. See also Xavier Sala-i-Martin, “The Disturbing ‘Rise’ of Global Income Inequality,” NBER Working Paper 8904, April 2002.

18. William Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists’ Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York: Penguin, 2005); Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Dani Rodrik, *One Economics, Many Recipes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); “The Growth Report” (see n. 15).

IMF adjustment loans between 1980 and 1994, the median per capita growth rate was zero.¹⁹ Of course, it could easily be that the worst-governed countries with the worst prospects were precisely those that received more than one adjustment loan per year; those that did well did not apply for loans, and where the loans were successful, they would tend to stop. Nevertheless, Okin was correct that, especially in Africa, development efforts have been disturbingly unsuccessful. The World Bank certainly cannot be considered a resounding success. Global poverty and inequality are morally unacceptable by any universalistic cosmopolitan standard.

These conclusions hold irrespective of gender differences. But, as Okin consistently argued, gender inequality is severe. Even if there were no global inequality by household—a utopian thought—there would be tremendous individual-level inequality as long as gender issues are not addressed. The major factors affecting income—education, work experience, and job characteristics—are affected by pervasive discrimination against women. Girls in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East receive fewer than two years of schooling, on average, for every three received by boys.²⁰ Women are consistently employed in lower-level positions than men.²¹ In developing countries, women receive only 73 percent of what men earn—80 percent of which cannot be explained by differences in education, work experience, or job characteristics.²² Furthermore, there is pervasive discrimination within the household: “In many cultures, when any scarcity exists women and girls tend to get less to eat and less health care than men and boys in the same household.”²³ Indeed, as Okin consistently emphasized, no clear line can be drawn between the public and the private sphere: some of the worst violations of women’s rights take place within the home, manifested in unequal access to basic goods such as food, in domestic violence, and in control (or lack of control) over sexuality. Informal practices of gender inequality are at the core of the problem.

AIDS: A GENDERED CATASTROPHE

The AIDS epidemic illustrates the significance of informal practices of gender inequality for economic development, institutions, and the lives of women, children, and, indeed, men.

More than 20 million people have died from AIDS, 3 million in 2003 alone.²⁴ Heterosexual intercourse is now the principal means of transmission. Although only 11 percent of the world’s people live in Africa, two-thirds of those with HIV/AIDS live in Africa, disproportionately in southern Africa. The probability of a

19. Okin, “Poverty, Well-Being and Gender,” 283.

20. World Bank, *Engendering Development*, 43.

21. Ester Boserup, “Economic Change and the Roles of Women,” in Irene Tinker, ed., *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 14–24.

22. World Bank, *Engendering Development*, 55.

23. Okin, “Poverty, Well-Being and Gender,” 284.

24. All figures in this paragraph are from the World Health Organization’s *Annual Report, 2004*, ch. 1. Available at http://www.who.int/whr/2004/en/03_chap1_en.pdf.

15-year-old in Kenya dying before reaching 60 years of age rose from 18 percent in the early 1990s to 48 percent by 2002. In Malawi, the comparable probability rose to 63 percent and in Zimbabwe to 80 percent. Overall life expectancy fell in Botswana between 1985–1990 and 2000–2005 from 65 to 40 years, and in South Africa, it is estimated to have dropped during the same period of time from 60 to 50 years. As a World Health Organization (WHO) report states, “Overall, life expectancy at birth in the African Region was 48 years in 2002; it would have been 54 years in the absence of AIDS.”

AIDS in Africa has spread so much largely because of male promiscuity, abetted by migration patterns. Despite the fact that men are largely responsible for the spread of AIDS in Africa, 58 percent of HIV/AIDS sufferers in Africa are women, and they are infected, on average, 6–8 years earlier in their lives than are men. About three-quarters of people aged 15–24 in sub-Saharan Africa who are infected by HIV/AIDS are women, for whom the risk of becoming infected during unprotected vaginal intercourse is greater than it is for men.²⁵ A 2004 report by UNAIDS shows that only about one-third of young women aged 15–24 were aware, at the turn of the millennium, of three basic HIV-prevention methods.²⁶ Even if women were better informed, social and economic inequalities would make it difficult or impossible for them to prevent their infection. In southern Africa, in particular, “migrant labour systems have aggravated women’s economic dependence on their male partners to a much greater extent than in other parts of the continent where women are more prominent in market trading and other forms of commercial activity.”²⁷ Furthermore, violence against women is widespread worldwide, and violence increases vulnerability to AIDS infection. As one researcher states: “The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS which has occurred in southern Africa over the last 15 years is importantly a result of the breakdown of family life of black South Africans and most particularly the inability of South African women to negotiate or control their sex lives.”²⁸

When Okin declared that informal practices of gender inequality are crucial barriers to development, she may or may not have been thinking of AIDS. Regardless, her statement most assuredly applies to the AIDS problem in southern Africa. The effects of these practices have been compounded by the unwillingness of a number of governments to take measures to deal with the epidemic. One-third of the world’s governments do not yet have policies to ensure that women have access to resources for the prevention and care of AIDS, and many policies that exist on paper are not implemented.²⁹

25. UNAIDS, *AIDS Epidemic Update 2004*. Available at <http://www.unaids.org>, 7, 11.

26. UNAIDS, *AIDS Epidemic Update*, 9. The three methods are avoiding penetrative sex, using condoms, and having sex with only one, faithful, partner.

27. UNAIDS, *AIDS Epidemic Update*, 10.

28. Gwyn Prins, “AIDS, Power, Culture and Multilateralism: A Case Study,” paper presented at a Social Science Research Council conference on “Multilateralism under Challenge,” Washington, DC, November 29–30, 2004, 18.

29. Kofi Annan, Address to XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, July 11, 2004. UN Press Release SG/SM/9418.AIDS/77. Available at <http://www.unaids.org>.

President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa has been particularly resistant to recognizing the AIDS epidemic and to taking measures to deal with it. When he was asked in the South African National Assembly in October 2004 about how male sexual behavior and the apparent pervasiveness of rape might account in part for the spread of HIV in South Africa, he accused the questioner of ignoring the central issue of racism. Refusing to discuss the link between HIV and AIDS, Mbeki said he would not keep quiet while “others whose minds have been corrupted by the disease of racism, accuse us, the black people of South Africa . . . as being, by virtue of our Africanness and skin colour, lazy, liars, foul-smelling, diseased, corrupt, violent, amoral, sexually depraved, animalistic, savage—and rapist.”³⁰

During his tenure in office, United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan was much more thoughtful, declaring that AIDS requires the education of girls and the empowerment of women and girls: a “change that will transform relations between women and men at all levels of society.”³¹

Throughout the AIDS crisis, rich countries such as the United States and multilateral institutions were slow to react. Since 2001, however, both the United States under the Bush administration and institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank have sought, along with private foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to take vigorous action.³² Tragically, the worst offenders have been the governments of countries, such as those of South Africa and Zimbabwe, whose people are most adversely affected by AIDS. When the World Bank undertook a relatively small AIDS program in Zimbabwe in 1993, it did not even attempt to change patterns of sexual behavior, since when bank officials tried to discuss the issue, Zimbabweans responded “with jokes about people having too much sex.” Even after the bank made AIDS a priority in 1999 with an allocation of \$1 billion, it met resistance from recipient governments. By April 2003, less than 10 percent of those funds had been allocated.³³

If one ever doubts how central gender inequalities are to development, one need only look at AIDS. Even if development were defined in purely economic, material terms, the impact of AIDS is devastating. It has reduced economic growth rates by 2–4 percent in Africa—to negative levels—and could, according to WHO, “result in complete economic collapse in some high-burden countries,” as the most active, energetic, and productive segments of the population are hit disproportionately hard.³⁴

30. *Cape Times* (South Africa), October 22, 2004. Available at <http://www.capetimes.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=271&fArticleId=2270410> (accessed December 14, 2004).

31. Annan, Address to XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok.

32. The global health program of the Gates Foundation awarded almost \$4 billion in grants during 2004, according to its Web site. The Gates Foundation accounted for about 5 percent of the funds received by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, more than any other country or international organization except for France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the European Commission. See <http://www.theglobalfund.org> (accessed December 14, 2004).

33. Sebastian Mallaby, *The World's Banker: A Story of Failed States, Financial Crises, and the Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 317, 330.

34. World Health Organization, *Annual Report, 2004*, available at http://www.who.int/whr/2004/en/03_chap1_en.pdf, 2.

GLOBALIZATION AND GENDER INEQUALITY: THE ACKERLY-OKIN CATALYTIC MODEL

Susan Okin approached issues of globalization and gender from the perspective of feminist social criticism. As I understand the Ackerly-Okin version of feminist social criticism, it has three central elements: (1) deliberative inquiry, involving discussion and social criticism that include members and nonmembers of a society; (2) skeptical scrutiny of prevailing values, focusing on exploitable inequalities; and (3) criteria for judgment, based on a belief in gender equality as an essential moral principle and on the specification of minimum standards for achieving it.³⁵ Ackerly and Okin describe the activities of NGOs devoted to women's rights and argue that these NGOs "made constructive use of globalization."³⁶ Feminist social criticism is facilitated by what Ackerly calls "multi-sited critics," who are knowledgeable both about local practices and about critical standpoints from outside.³⁷

The AIDS epidemic dramatically supports four propositions about gender and development that were developed by Susan Okin on the basis of feminist social criticism:

1. It is not sufficient to guarantee women equality in the public sphere, even if policies for formal gender equality are fully implemented. Many of the most crushing inequalities and burdens on women's capacities to lead good lives result from relationships conventionally considered outside the public sphere, including inequality and violence inside the family and the devaluation of women's work in the home.
2. Traditional practices, including religiously sanctioned practices, often oppress women by denying them opportunities for education, health, sustenance, freedom from violence, and meaningful activities outside the home.
3. These practices are so strongly upheld by prevailing beliefs in the localities involved that they are unlikely to change without the participation of outsiders, who can reinforce the political voice of people inside the societies who are critical of prevailing practices.
4. A necessary condition, therefore, for a great reduction in gender inequality is a vigorous indigenous movement of feminist social criticism, able to point out the inequities of traditional practices in terms understandable in the society concerned.³⁸

It seems to follow from these four propositions that a fully *nonglobalized* world—in which each country is fully insulated from events outside of it—would, in many parts of the world, be bad for gender equality. The concept of human rights, and the related concept of women's rights as human rights, has some of its strongest advocates in

35. Ackerly and Okin, "Feminist Social Criticism," 138–139.

36. Ackerly and Okin, "Feminist Social Criticism," 143.

37. Brooke Ackerly, *Political Theory and Feminist Social Criticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

38. Ackerly and Okin, "Feminist Social Criticism."

wealthy liberal democracies. Indeed, there is new empirical evidence that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has had a positive impact on women's rights. Controlling for other factors, two separate studies have shown that CEDAW ratification is associated with educational opportunities for women.³⁹ There is also evidence that CEDAW is associated with access to modern forms of birth control and with higher female life expectancy, participation in the economy, and representation in national legislatures.⁴⁰

Okin and Ackerly sketch what I call a "catalytic" model of change. As Okin points out, too much pressure, or too much domination, from Western liberals undercuts local activists and could give rise to charges of imperialism.⁴¹ But too little involvement can help to perpetuate an oppressive status quo. The outside critic, and the multi-sited critic, can stimulate a process of feminist social criticism by raising questions that problematize what is otherwise taken for granted and that validate similar concerns expressed by people within the society. However, to accomplish their goals, insiders must take the lead.

If this analysis is correct, it clarifies the issue of what multilateral institutions and NGOs can and cannot do. They cannot directly achieve gender equalization, since they do not exert direct effects on local communities, much less within the home, and they carry neither the coercive capacity of coherent, tightly organized states nor the emotionally laden appeal that sometimes accompanies nationalism. If they are to make a difference, they will have to facilitate or promote feminist social criticism—to help provide a safe space for such criticism, to stimulate it, and to legitimate it, in some combination. Is there any reason to believe that multilateral institutions or NGOs can do this effectively?

MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS, NGOS, AND GENDER INEQUALITY

Both multilateral organizations and NGOs profess interest in reducing or eliminating gender inequality. Since multilateral organizations are more politically constrained than NGOs in what they can say, one might be tempted to rely on NGOs and what has come to be known as "global civil society" to take the lead. However, discussions of the vitality of global civil society should not be allowed to obscure the fact that NGOs are tiny compared even to multilateral organizations, much less to states. What NGOs can accomplish by themselves is therefore quite limited.

Consider first the most important international financial institutions: the World Bank, the IMF, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. In

39. Mark Gray, Miki Caul Kittilson, and Wayne Sandholtz, "Women and Globalization: A Study of Quality of Life and Equality Indicators in 180 Nations, 1975–2000," unpublished manuscript, Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine (2005), 48; Beth Simmons, "Women's Equality: Education, Work and Reproduction," in Simmons, *International Human Rights: Law, Politics, and Accountability* (forthcoming).

40. Gray et al., "Women and Globalization"; Simmons, "Women's Equality."

41. Okin, "Poverty, Well-Being and Gender."

fiscal 2003, the two major arms of the World Bank group—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA)—together loaned \$20 billion.⁴² The IMF's lending for the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, the main development effort of the IMF, amounted to about \$1.4 billion in 2004.⁴³ Pledges to the Global Fund, for periods of time running from one to eight years, total \$5.5 billion.⁴⁴ These numbers are reasonably large, although even World Bank lending was only about 1 percent of the U.S. government's budget.

The resources available to UN agencies are much less than those at the disposal of the IMF and World Bank. Even relatively large UN agencies, those not focused on women, have budgets that are only about 2 percent of World Bank lending. UNICEF's budget is less than \$350 million per year, and that of the World Health Organization is less than \$450 million. The political explanation for these disparities is simple: voting at the IMF and World Bank is weighted by contributions, whereas at the United Nations, one state has one vote. Donors are reluctant to give huge amounts of money to organizations over which they exert little formal control. The World Bank also borrows large amounts in capital markets—an activity for which the backing of rich states is essential.

The NGOs and women-oriented arms of the UN system are another order of magnitude smaller than the general-purpose UN development agencies, such as WHO. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had a budget in 2002 of about \$36 million.⁴⁵ Oxfam America had a budget in 2003 of \$29.9 million.⁴⁶ The Global Fund for Women, a grant-making organization focused on the empowerment of women, had a budget of \$5.1 million in 2002–2003.⁴⁷ So Oxfam America, which seeks to empower women, among other development goals, has a budget that is about as large as UNIFEM—about 10 percent of that of UNICEF and less than two-tenths of 1 percent of World Bank lending.

Even the apparently large sums allocated by the World Bank and the IMF are widely seen as insufficient to meet the millennium development goals of the United Nations: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, and achieve five other related goals.⁴⁸ The conclusion therefore seems inescapable that the programmatic activities of NGOs—delivering aid to people who need it—will have only a minor *direct* impact on the eradication of gender

42. World Bank, "Implementing the Bank's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy: Second Annual Monitoring Report, FY 03" (January 29, 2004). Available at www.worldbank.org (accessed October 12, 2004).

43. International Monetary Fund, *IMF Annual Report, Fiscal 2004*. Available at www.imf.org.

44. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria's Web site is <http://www.theglobalfund.org>.

45. United Nations Development Fund for Women, *UNIFEM Annual Report 2002–2003*. Available at www.unifem.org.

46. Oxfam America, *Annual Report 2003*. Available at www.oxfamamerica.org.

47. Global Fund for Women, *Annual Report 2003*. Available at www.globalfundforwomen.org.

48. United Nations, *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (2000). Available at www.un.org/millenniumgoals; Peter Heller, "Can the IMF Contribute to the Promotion of the MDGs Relating to Gender Equality?" Speech to a meeting of High-Level Women in International Finance, Economics, and Development, Dubai, September 20, 2003. Available at www.imf.org (accessed October 11, 2004).

inequality. Grants by organizations such as Oxfam can be important because of their positive impact on specific communities and individual people and because of their potentially very important demonstration effects. In particular, community-based action can help women to organize and thereby empower them, without necessarily bringing in huge new resources. By successful innovation, NGOs can lead the way, encouraging governments and multilateral organizations to follow in their footsteps. By themselves, however, even the best NGOs cannot change large-scale gendered structures of power and privilege on a global basis. Implementing good ideas for economic advancement and empowerment so that hundreds of millions of people are affected will require substantial sums of taxpayers' money, typically channeled through multilateral institutions.

A second conclusion is that increases in knowledge and deepening of understanding are critical to reducing gender inequality. If NGOs that are committed to women's rights are to succeed, they will have to change how we think about gender issues. To do so, they will have to engage in successful pilot programs, showing what can be done to reduce gender inequality, and in effective advocacy. The accomplishments of NGOs committed to women's rights—for instance, at the Vienna UN Conference on Human Rights in 1993 and the 1995 Beijing Conference on the role of women—have not been the result of direct programmatic activity alone. Programmatic activity has been important to demonstrate that something can be done well, but the impact of what NGOs can do themselves needs to be magnified many times. To achieve this, NGOs committed to women's rights have mobilized networks of supporters to transmit a message that has resonated in multilateral institutions and the global media. The mobilization process for Vienna involved networks of women working in NGOs, in multilateral organizations, and in national governments, both northern and southern.⁴⁹ The NGO Forum of the 1995 Beijing Conference featured a computer center that facilitated networking and political mobilization worldwide.⁵⁰

Demonstration and advocacy by NGOs can catalyze demonstration and advocacy by multilateral organizations, thus magnifying the direct effects of NGOs. With respect to this point, it is important to understand that multilateral organizations have increasingly become what have been called “international knowledge institutions,” which seek “to authoritatively define the knowledge base for global policymaking.”⁵¹ No single NGO or government has sufficient legitimacy to define the nature of global problems. Multilateral organizations have many deficiencies with respect to their legitimacy and accountability, but neither states nor NGOs are more credible with a general audience, especially in developing countries themselves, than agencies such as UNAIDS, WHO,

49. Charlotte Bunch and Niamh Reilly, *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights* (Rutgers, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, and New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women, 1994), 7 and ch. 10.

50. Lois West, “The United Nations Women's Conference and Feminist Politics,” in Mary Meyer and Elizabeth Prugl, eds., *Gender Politics in Global Governance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 192.

51. Clark Miller, “Knowledge, Reason and the Constitution of Democratic Order in International Governance,” unpublished paper, Lafollette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin, Madison (2004), no pagination.

and the World Bank. Only by catalyzing the epistemic activities of multilateral organizations can NGOs magnify their own efforts.

My third proposition may be more controversial. I believe that, if effective programmatic action is to be taken in the near future on a global basis to reduce global gender inequality, the World Bank will have to be deeply involved. As we have seen, multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF have much greater resources available to them than do NGOs. Among the multilateral organizations, the bank not only does much more poverty-related lending than the International Monetary Fund; it is far ahead of the IMF in its attention to gender issues. In the next section, I will discuss the bank's recent activities in more detail, but perusal of the two organizations' Web sites is telling. A 2005 search of the bank's Web site for "gender inequality" yielded over 800 items, which from their titles all seem directly to focus on this set of issues. A similar search on the IMF Web site turned up 201 items, the overwhelming majority of which referred to poverty reduction strategy papers, which are prepared by the countries involved with the aid of staff from the bank and the fund. Furthermore, the bank has a page on its Web site devoted to gender, which features work by its Gender and Development Group and links to a number of in-depth reports. Searching the IMF site for gender yielded a list of hundreds of documents without thematic organization. The first such document was a speech by Peter S. Heller, deputy director of the Fiscal Affairs Department, to a meeting of High-Level Women in International Finance, Economics, and Development in Dubai on September 20, 2003.⁵² Heller argued that the IMF could contribute to the promotion of the millennium development goals related to gender equality, but his speech made it clear that he was appealing for action and that very little had in fact been done.

THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD BANK TO FEMINIST CRITICISM

Susan Okin concluded one of her last published articles as follows: "Until what women do counts as much as what men do, until women's capabilities are fostered as much as men's, until women's voices are heard as strongly as men's... the development of the LDCs is doomed. The project simply cannot succeed until gender, as well as poverty, is central to it."⁵³

This statement may seem radical, but it is paralleled, in less stirring prose, by official bank statements, approved by the board of directors or uttered by the president. In the preface to a major World Bank report, *Engendering Development* (2001), President James Wolfensohn declared that "large gender disparities...are inextricably linked to poverty."⁵⁴ *Engendering Development* led to *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action*, which was approved by the board of directors in September 2001 and published in January 2002.⁵⁵ The first lines of chapter 1 of that document read:

52. Heller, "Can the IMF Contribute?"

53. Okin, "Poverty, Well-Being and Gender," 316.

54. World Bank, *Engendering Development*, xi.

55. World Bank, *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action* (Washington, DC: World Bank, January 2002).

Gender equality is an issue of development effectiveness, not just a matter of political correctness or kindness to women. New evidence demonstrates that when women and men are relatively equal, economies tend to grow faster, the poor move more quickly out of poverty, and the well-being of men, women and children is enhanced.⁵⁶

The next ten pages of *Integrating Gender* document these claims on the basis of a variety of studies, most done by the World Bank itself—by far the leading source of systematic information on development. A key point of *Integrating Gender* is that gender equality is not at odds with economic development but, on the contrary, is a key tool for achieving meaningful development—as well as being valuable in its own right.

Since the mid-1990s, a number of World Bank studies have shown that educating women generates higher marginal returns than educating men: it lowers birth rates, and it increases agricultural productivity.⁵⁷

Integrating Gender goes on to echo another complaint made by Okin and others about philosophical and economic studies that take the male-headed household as an unproblematic unit of analysis:

In standard neoclassical economic theory, households are usually regarded as sharing a single utility function and an equitable distribution of resources and well-being. Recent studies, however, suggest that this view is often invalid. Unequal gender relations—which are found in most countries of the world—tend to bias the extent to which male versus female household members enjoy the benefits of the household's assets and resources.⁵⁸

To read *Integrating Gender* is to understand that, during James Wolfensohn's tenure as president of the World Bank, feminist critics won the *intellectual* battle at the bank. As Okin argued, this battle was won through a combination of intellectual accomplishments, such as Amartya Sen's research on development and poverty, and political action, including relentless organizing and lobbying at UN meetings, such as the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.⁵⁹ The UN General Assembly adopted an even more extensive statement on gender issues in 2000.⁶⁰ All of these statements have nominally been accepted by all states that belong to the United Nations.

Integrating Gender was meant to be an operational document. Most of it was devoted to outlining changes in the policies and practices of the bank, which were designed to make country-level operations more sensitive to gender issues. The plan for "mainstreaming gender" focused on a "country gender assessment" (CGA), to be carried out for each country in which there are bank projects, to identify "the gender-responsive

56. World Bank, *Integrating Gender*, 1.

57. Isobel Coleman, "The Payoff from Women's Rights," *Foreign Affairs* (May–June 2004). Available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org> (accessed May 23, 2005).

58. World Bank, *Integrating Gender*, 10.

59. See also Emilie Hafner-Burton and Mark A. Pollack, "Mainstreaming Gender in Global Governance," *European Journal of International Relations* 8.3 (2002): 339–373.

60. United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly* (2000). Document No. A/S-23/10/Rev. 1.

actions that are important for poverty reduction, economic growth, human well-being, and development effectiveness.”⁶¹ The CGA was then to be used to identify policy and operational actions that the government may decide to take. An example, from Vietnam, is an analysis of the effect of layoffs as a result of reform of state-owned enterprises. A study found that women who were laid off benefited from lump-sum payments, while men benefited more from compensation packages defined as a multiple of earnings. Taking the situation of women into account, the proposed bank action involved a compensation package with a substantial lump-sum component.⁶² The third step in the process involved incorporating a gender dimension into the criteria used to assess the quality of the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) for each country. The PRSP was to be prepared by stakeholders in the country—so that they would have “ownership” of the process. It was then supposed to be the key analytic tool to be used by both the bank and the fund to guide their activities. Each PRSP was to be evaluated jointly by bank and fund analysts in what is called a joint staff assessment (JSA). The gender-mainstreaming strategy called for gender issues to be integrated into the JSAs.

In organizations, strategies are only as good as their implementation, and someone more qualified than I, and more focused professionally on the activities of the World Bank, would have to evaluate the implementation of *Integrating Gender*. It is not clear that enhanced attention from bank staff necessarily has translated into effective action by governments. Indeed, the bank’s own implementation report in 2004 said: “The Bank *and some of our clients* are learning to recognize the importance of gender equality for poverty reduction and sustained economic growth” (italics added).⁶³ The italicized phrase implies the key problem faced by the bank. The “hard-loan,” or IBRD, side of the bank makes a profit on its lending activities, which is essential to maintaining the professional staff that is at the heart of its knowledge-producing activities. The “soft-loan” side of the bank—the IDA—needs willing clients to stay in business. The key tensions that the bank always needs to face are between the demands of NGOs and advocacy groups, including those pressing for the empowerment of women and gender equality, on the one hand, and resistance by governments, on the other. Structurally, there will always be resistance—from client governments—to the bank’s attempts to promote policies to improve environmental quality, empower women, and devote special attention to the poor and powerless.⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, feminist advocacy groups have often been critical. An early report from the advocacy group Gender Action documented the initially slow pace of implementation.⁶⁵ The number of gender experts within the bank had risen from 1 (in 1977) to 115, but this number still represented only about 15 percent of the number of environmental experts and less than 1 percent of bank staff. Furthermore, relatively

61. World Bank, *Integrating Gender*, 18.

62. World Bank, *Integrating Gender*, 27.

63. World Bank, “Implementing the Bank’s Gender Mainstreaming Strategy,” 17.

64. Bruce Rich, “The World Bank under James Wolfensohn,” in Pincus and Winters, eds., *Reinventing the World Bank*, 26–53.

65. Elaine Zuckerman and Wu Qing, “Reforming the World Bank: Will the New Gender Strategy Make a Difference?” (Heinrich Boll Foundation, 2003). Available at <http://www.genderaction.org>.

few bank staff apart from the gender experts seemed to know about the gender-mainstreaming strategy or to have strong incentives to implement it. Nevertheless, the Gender Action researchers found that gender issues were being increasingly included in country assistance strategies through the country gender assessments: progress was slow, but some progress was being made.

It comes as no surprise to anyone who has studied gender-related inequalities that resistance to change is tenacious. It is easier for the bank to reform its nominal policies than its actual practices and much easier to reform its own practices than to persuade governments to change their ways. If the bank is to promote women's equality, this will require not only incremental work from bank staff but also agitation from outside. In this regard, Brooke Ackerly's concept of "multi-sited critics" may be useful in thinking about the role of operational staff members of the World Bank who are committed to gender equity. Since they are affiliated with the World Bank, they cannot be freewheeling critics who point to all of the contradictions between nominal policies and real practices. But they do need relentlessly to point out key contradictions at the operational level. They can use egalitarian policies to discredit antiegalitarian practices. And if the strategy of focusing on the bank is to succeed, they need to be held accountable for their advice, although this is difficult because they do not control the outcomes themselves. The bank should encourage their multisited policy entrepreneurs not only to maintain good working relationships with their governmental counterparts, but to keep working, diplomatically but effectively, for change. The cogent research findings from groups such as Gender Action are valuable resources for people inside and outside the bank who are pressing for more effective implementation of the gender-mainstreaming strategy.

BANK-FOCUSED STRATEGIES FOR NGOS

It is evident that the adoption of UN resolutions, often hypocritically, by the highly gendered governments of highly gendered societies does not mean that feminist critics have won the operational battle. Nor does the enunciation of progressive World Bank policies in officially sponsored reports mean that the battle is over or that activism is no longer needed. The bank did not move in the 1990s toward its more progressive position under its own power. On the contrary, it was pushed and prodded by the criticism of observers, such as Susan Okin, and by the example and criticism of NGOs, such as Gender Action and the Global Fund for Women. Without such outside pressure on a continuing basis, there is every reason to believe that bank policies would again be dominated by two sets of interests: those of shareholder governments and of recipient governments. Neither of these interests—without internal and external pressure on them—can be trusted to give priority to issues of gender equity.

However, official statements at UN conferences, by the World Bank, and in the 1979 CEDAW do provide a point of leverage, since hypocrisy is not a position anyone can publicly defend in an international meeting. As Prugl and Meyer state, "[T]he significance of international documents is not that governments will automatically implement them but that national and local groups can use them to hold their governments

accountable.”⁶⁶ As noted earlier, there is empirical evidence now that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has made a significant impact on women’s lives.⁶⁷

Since the World Bank is by far the largest multilateral development agency, reinventing globalization for gender equality requires successful engagement with the bank. For the bank to intensify its work to promote gender equality, there will have to be continuing pressure from outside, amplifying the voices of those pushing for change from within. For implementation of the new nominal practices to occur, and for the further extension of principles of gender equality, the women’s rights as human rights movement will have to maintain an organized and mobilized political presence. Both commitment and resources are important.

For the necessary combination of commitment and resources to be mobilized, social movements concerned with global poverty and gender inequality will have to organize in rich democracies as well as in less developed countries. The political and organizational base in rich countries for effective influence on issues of gender and development is narrow. Even more than most politics, this process of reinventing globalization will be Weber’s “slow boring of hard boards,” although the means will be the contemporary techniques of networking and instant communication. To be effective in reinventing globalization, these social movements will have to be focused. A natural negative focus is the AIDS epidemic in southern Africa, whose dimensions are shocking and whose human implications are easily dramatized. Efforts to reinvent globalization to promote gender equality need to include constructive engagement with the new World Bank leadership, insofar as such leadership is willing to press for genuine progress on these issues.

In my view, the most promising strategy for the promotion of progressive change would combine support for the World Bank’s leadership when it actively promotes gender equality with attempts to accelerate lagging policies and implementation. In her 2003 *Philosophy and Public Affairs* article, Okin recognized the bank’s centrality and its moves toward incorporating gender issues into its practices, and she criticized the slowness and inadequacy of its work so far. In my judgment, feminist social movements and NGOs should, as Okin did, neither demonize the bank nor glorify it, but subject it to criticism within the context of support for what the bank claims to be doing.

My argument is certainly not that NGOs should cease innovation and criticism. On the contrary, NGO innovation and criticism have been crucial in making progress so far. It is imperative that NGOs continue to maintain critical distance from the bank and to demand deeds rather than just words from its new leadership. Nor do I advocate abandoning the language of human rights, which is the intellectual basis on which improved policies and practices can be built. What I do suggest is that focused efforts to work with the World Bank on issues of gender inequality may have higher payoffs for women, and for development, than broad general claims.

66. Elizabeth Prugl and Mary Meyer, “Gender Politics in Global Governance,” in Mary Meyer and Elizabeth Prugl, eds., *Gender Politics in Global Governance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 13.

67. Simmons, “Women’s Equality.”

Where are the resources going to come from to make a major impact on gender inequality, if not from the World Bank? We have seen how small NGO resources are compared to the bank's. No major rich country can be relied upon to give priority to development, much less to gender equity in development. The World Bank is surely a flawed organization, but of the organizations with the financial and organizational potential to make a huge difference, it is among the most promising.

I recognize that any such strategy involves trade-offs. As the history of environmental NGOs indicates, unrelieved outrage is often a more effective fundraising strategy than the explication of a nuanced, well-considered strategy for effective reform. Indeed, there is plenty of room for outrage. The depth and extent of world poverty remains a scandal. Capitalism continues to generate inequality, as it always has. The World Bank in its structural adjustment phase managed both to aggravate those inequalities and to be, on the whole, ineffective in disciplining governments. The AIDS crisis has exposed the male-dominated practices and the policies of governments which have both created and exacerbated the virulent epidemic. The World Bank, despite its mixed record, has sometimes been an ally against terrible abuses. It has the potential, if pressed sufficiently vigorously, to do more. It should be engaged, not demonized.

CONCLUSION

The AIDS epidemic demonstrates how crucial gender issues are to development. Focusing on gender is not a fashionable northern fad, exporting political correctness to poor countries that cannot afford it. On the contrary, without focusing on gender, real development will not occur and human suffering will be much greater than it needs to be. If this point ever needed demonstration, the AIDS epidemic tragically does so.

As Susan Okin emphasized, the most effective pressure for change in pervasive gender inequalities will come from people who live in the countries in which action needs to be taken. But if these potential activists are isolated from their natural allies in the wealthy democracies, they will have difficulty finding safe spaces for criticism, or the ability to be heard, even locally. Hence, feminist social activism will continue to try to reinvent globalization, to use globalism as a tool for change.

Some of this activism will continue to be entirely at the transnational level, creating and maintaining networks. Conferences such as Beijing in 1995 have been enormously successful in establishing such networks where they formerly did not exist. The results, at least in terms of policy declarations by governments, have been impressive. But these networks necessarily remain at the elite level, linking activists in rich democracies with those relatively few women who can travel, or at least have access to modern means of communication, in developing countries. They are coordinated by small organizations. For example, as of 2005, the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) had a staff of 18 people, mostly young, as indicated on its Web site (www.awid.org). As noted above, it stretches credulity to believe that their impact on gender inequality, at a global level, would be very large.

In the awareness-raising stage of the struggle for gender equality, feminist movements used major UN conferences to get attention from the media and to put across

their powerful message about the connections between gender equality and development. The problem now is to deepen our knowledge base about the consequences of gender inequality and how it can be radically transformed and to ensure that programmatic action, carried out by governments on the ground, reflects this new awareness. Although its effectiveness is quite uneven and its practices need serious reform, the World Bank is the principal point of access for feminists to affect the policies of governments in less developed countries.

The continuation of tensions within the bank and between NGOs and client governments should not surprise us. Nor should a high level of criticism and dissatisfaction fool us into believing that nothing is being accomplished. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, cooperation on issues that involve competing values builds more on discord than on harmony. It comes as a process of mutual adjustment between people or groups whose independent perspectives differ. Women's capabilities will only be valued on a global basis if there is sustained international cooperation to realize it. In this decade, such cooperation will be most effective if the World Bank takes a leadership role in the struggle. The frequent discord that accompanies this process should be regarded as a perfectly normal aspect of contentious cooperation.

The background conditions exist for dramatic progress to be made. Our understanding of the gender dimensions of international development and antipoverty efforts has expanded greatly since the mid-1990s. There is a vibrant NGO community, part of which is specifically focused on gender equality. The World Bank during the Wolfensohn presidency became publicly committed to the empowerment of women and to the reduction and eventual elimination of gender discrimination. UNAIDS has spoken forthrightly about how gender inequality contributes to the epidemic. Feminist social movements are now linked together, in a complex variety of networks, and are also connected to other groups in global civil society. But the resources available to overcome gender inequality are pitifully small. They will only increase if political movements that care about women and international development become as strong as comparable movements that emphasize women's rights in rich countries, the environment, or human rights in general.

We are seeing the emergence of a contentious process of discordant cooperation involving feminist social movements, the World Bank, and governments—in both rich democracies and less developed countries. To move toward Susan Moller Okin's vision of a world of gender equality, this process of discordant cooperation will have to follow the direction that she charted and to be accelerated and enhanced.