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# Globalisation and Emancipation: From Local Empowerment to Global Reform

JAN NEDERVEEN PIETERSE

These are dramatic times. We have entered the era of global politics but have grown up in an age of national politics. Globalisation generates anxiety because it places people within the reach of forces which are or seem to be outside the range of conventional forms of political control. Along with the sense of powerlessness comes the cognitive and emotional anxiety of conventional frames of reference losing their relevance, without new, hospitable and welcoming images being available. Political conventions, analytical frameworks, mental habits, all are under pressure.

This reflection seeks to develop two arguments on globalisation and politics. The first insists that it is necessary to move from opposition to proposition. Second, the 'new localism'—one of the reactions to and expressions of globalisation—can be taken either in an inward-looking or an outward-looking sense; the present argument is for an outward-looking localism, in which local empowerment connects with efforts towards democratisation and reform at wider levels of governance. The key argument suggests that what is needed is to build new bridges and strengthen existing ones between local empowerment and global reform. The article thus discusses combined and uneven globalisation, reviews the politics of resistance and civil society networking, looks back at the earlier arena of empire and emancipation, and asks what form emancipation is now taking, and could take, in the 21st century.

## **Uneven globalisation**

Globalisation refers to a worldwide reach and impact, which may be virtual or actual, but does not refer to an even global spread of gain and loss. Globalisation is frequently characterised as 'truncated globalisation', concentrated in the triad of western Europe, North America and Japan. 'Triadisation' is another commonly used term. Thus globalisation refers to a new distribution of power, in which it overlaps and interacts with other trends, e.g. informalisation, informatisation and flexibilisation.

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While the development gap between the advanced economies and the newly industrialised economies has narrowed, the gap between these and most developing countries is widening. This reflects a partial reversal of an earlier trend of gradual integration of developing countries into the international division of labour. With regard to trade, international capital flows and foreign direct investment, there has been a marked downturn in the participation in the world economy of developing countries since the beginning of the 1980s. Thus in 1980 the share of world trade of manufactured goods of the 102 poorest countries of the world was 7.9 per cent of world exports and 9 per cent of imports; 10 years later these shares fell to 1.4 per cent and 4.9 per cent respectively.<sup>1</sup> Figures for international capital flows and interfirm cooperation confirm this trend of concentration or reconcentration within the triad zone. 'In other words, the world economy has been characterized in the last twenty years at least by a gradual *reduction* of the exchanges between the richest and fast-growing countries of North America, Western Europe and Pacific/Asia and the rest of the world—Africa in particular.'<sup>2</sup>

Western societies that have experienced the 'magic of the market place' are referred to as 'two-thirds societies'. We could now speak of a 'one-third world society' considering that the majority of humanity is excluded from life in the global fast lane. The pattern of exclusion, however, no longer runs simply North-South: 'Tiny segments of poor-country populations are integrated into the world economy network, while rich countries are generating their own internal Third Worlds'.<sup>3</sup> The middle class in developing countries participates in the global circuits of advertising, brand name consumerism and high-tech services, which, at another end of the circuitry, increasingly exclude the underclass in advanced economies.

The available analytical instruments derive from another world order and seem too blunt to map the new dispensation accurately. For instance, according to Mittelman, 'the foremost contradiction of our time is the conflict between the zones of humanity integrated in the global division of labor and those excluded from it'.<sup>4</sup> This kind of diagnosis lacks precision. 'Contradiction', and the idea of a rank order of contradictions, is familiar neo-Marxist terminology with reductionist implications (not all forms of exclusion can be meaningfully characterised in terms of contradiction); focusing solely on the international division of labour, while crucial, is likewise reductive; exclusion is not quite accurate, nor does it necessarily translate into 'conflict'. The term 'exclusion' ignores the many ways in which developing countries are *included* in global processes: they are subject to global financial discipline (as in structural adjustment and interest payments, resulting in net capital outflows) and part of global markets (resource flows, distribution networks, diaspora and niche markets), global ecology, international politics, global communications, science and technology, international development cooperation, transnational civil society, international migration, travel and crime networks. For instance, the public health sector in many African countries is increasingly being internationalised. Thus it would be more accurate to speak of *asymmetrical inclusion* or hierarchical integration. A classic term for this situation used to be 'combined and uneven development', but now one of the differences is that the units are no longer nations. It is this new pattern of uneven

inclusion that generates anxiety and frustration. The disjuncture between global dynamics and existing political infrastructures and intellectual frames generates malaise bordering on angst and in the process inspires resistance and protest which are seeking effective political forms.

### **Politics of resistance**

Most social science conferences these days address globalisation and when it comes to politics 'resistance' is a favourite. A recent conference featured a session on 'people's responses to globalisation'. In effect this reduces globalisation to corporate globalisation and apparently situates people not as participants and agents but as passive bystanders in globalisation. What about people as consumers, producers, distributors of transnational commodities and services, as travellers, migrants, participants in transnational communication, international organisations, social movements? If one has first taken people out of globalisation, it may be a little difficult and somewhat of a detour to put them back in.

Resistance is not a particularly enabling position, analytically or politically. From resistance there are not many places to go to other than 'anti-globalisation'. This points to the option of delinking, the exit option. In some versions of dependency theory, delinking from world capitalism used to be advocated as a radical way out. It may be characterised, however, as the shortest way to Albania.<sup>5</sup> The irony is that delinking as a voluntary exit strategy has now made way for involuntary exclusion. According to one account, 'de-linking is a process through which some countries and regions are gradually losing their connections with the most economically developed and growing countries and regions of the world ... De-linking concerns almost all countries of Africa, most parts of Latin America and Asia (with the exception of countries in Southeast Asia) as well as parts of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe'.<sup>6</sup> Thus the very term has changed meaning: from an act of defiance it has become a seal of exclusion. Not that this irony itself is new. The lack of interest among multinational corporations in investing in developing countries was already noted back in the 1960s when it was pointed out that the problem was not merely exploitation by international capital but also *not* being exploited by international capital.

Now what some recommend in relation to globalisation is *localism*. This may be where anti-globalisation, anti-development, anti-modernity, anti-science, only-small-is-beautiful come together in an 'island' politics—seeking liberated zones 'outside the system', enclaves that provide shelter from the storm, usually in the hope that the system will somehow atrophy or collapse.<sup>7</sup> By implication this is of course the 'crisis of capitalism' thesis revisited, now inspired by ecological dread and apocalyptic risk, and reanimated under the heading of localism or post-development. If the 'gospel of crisis' has paralysed and crippled the left and progressive forces for 150 years (since 1848), why not carry on for another 100 or so?

This is reminiscent of an old choice: drop out or change the system. The step from local struggle to juggernaut reform is not an easy one to take, but globalisation presents problems that point beyond the politics of resistance,

protest and local struggles to wider horizons. If this premise is accepted it raises several questions. How can the 'weapons of the weak' become tools of transformation? How can local 'everyday forms of resistance' be integrated in a politics of emancipation? The hiatus that now runs through struggles over resources, niches and futures virtually the world over is the step from resistance to emancipation, from local empowerment to wider engagement. Bridging this gap involves several elements. One is the step from critique to construction. Thus in post-apartheid South Africa the habitus of activists on the ground had to adjust from struggle to transformation, from opposition to proposition. Another is the step from local to wider horizons. Several such bridges exist or are in construction.

### **Civil society regionalism**

From Africa to the Americas and Asia, local peasant and urban social movements combine in various wider initiatives. Building regional civil society is a theme that runs through many fields of action, often as a stepping stone to wider links. In Pacific Asia it is a matter of combining 'democracy on the spot' with 'transborder participatory democracy'.<sup>8</sup> In Africa democracy often serves as an ideology of domination. 'The only realistic option for reducing corruption, making political systems more responsive, and bettering the lot of the poor', according to Fantu Cheru, 'is to democratize both democracy and capitalism'.<sup>9</sup> Along the way there are several problems: analytical, political and organisational.

A major trend in activist programmes is resistance to arrangements that promote free trade and capital movement across national borders. Civil society links connect Zapatistas in the Chiapas province of Mexico with labour and community activists in the USA and Canada who oppose the free trade regime of NAFTA. In Pacific Asia civil society mobilisation focuses on APEC and other market-driven hegemonies invading and pervading Asia and the Pacific Basin. With respect to social movements in rural Africa, Cheru notes:

A comprehensive development alternative cannot go far enough without a basic change in political structures ... This implies that the popular sector must have another political agenda over and above its main business of disempowering centralized structures. In other words, it has to come up with a state agenda of its own ... Here lies precisely the dilemma of nongovernmental and people's organizations. By nature their main concern is social politics—in other words, self-governance whose success is measured mainly in terms of the circles or poles of popular power that they create at the base.<sup>10</sup>

For people's organisations (POs) and NGOs this leads to problems of their identity getting blurred and confused, to state substitution and parallelism (NGOs/POs setting up bureaucracies and laying claim to territorial jurisdiction) and clientelism. Similar dilemmas arise in parts of Asia and Latin America. They represent, as it were, the failure of the success of civil society activism. Civil

society empowerment comes to a point where either it pursues the path of local autonomy, a path of *de facto* state substitution, or it accepts being a player in a pluralistic field, side by side with the state and market forces. Cooperation with the state is increasingly accepted in principle (a strong civil society and strong state go together),<sup>11</sup> although in practice it may come at a price of depoliticisation. Cooperation with business is often more difficult to conceive and achieve.

When a government lumbers from crisis to crisis, without a policy direction, people shrug their shoulders and call it crisis management. When international NGOs behave in the same way it is regarded as normal. Yet the very growth and scope of civil society networks prompts the question: what lies beyond the politics of resistance? What *forward* programmes inform activist networks? A critique of NICs is a common line of thinking but this is only a critical position. There are more forward propositions but they tend to be of limited scope. Thus, in Africa, elements of an alternative approach include recognising informal economies, building regional civil society, accommodating peasant resistance to cash-crop production, promoting peasant knowledge, facilitating peasant institutional capacity building, and developing a pro-peasant economic policy, including land reform, within the framework of self-reliant development.<sup>12</sup> Forward programmes may take the form of a national alternative development design, as in Walden Bello's programme for equitable and sustainable growth in the Philippines.<sup>13</sup> They may involve attempts to transform corporate-driven regionalism into a social and popular regionalism, or the invocation of an alternative principle of organisation, such as Muto's 'taking back the economy' through people's accumulation at grassroots level,<sup>14</sup> or Xavier Gorostiaga's 'logic of the majority'.

Are these propositions viable? In scope and comprehensiveness do they add up to an alternative that has the potential to generate a hegemony, 'a shared sense of reality'? A limitation of several programmes is their character of 'third sector' politics, a politics of people, community or civil society. In order to transcend the local struggle and protest mode, however, what would be required is a multi-sector politics, i.e. an outlook and programme broad and attractive enough to accommodate government and business sectors as well. What else would 'democratising capitalism' be about if not about exploring social market options? In civil society activism, the *social* agenda is usually clear: it concerns questions such as equity, participation, empowerment; the *political* agenda is also clear: it is about democratisation, decentralisation, debureaucratisation, human rights, citizenship rights, pluralism. What is usually much less clear and less developed is the *economic* agenda. Or, what is on offer under this rubric is the social economy, the cooperative sector, people-to-people trade, fair trade, socially responsible business, eco-business. The problem is that by and large this is a 'Mondragon' type of programme. How many Mondragons are there, what is the scope for the replication of Mondragons, and how real is the Mondragon alternative in the first place? What is missing is an *overall* enabling economic analysis and agenda, rather than an island approach *within* the sphere of economics. Weak links between 'old' (labour) and new social movements (women, identity, community, human rights, ecological movements) are one of the expressions of the relative weakness of economic programmes in civil

society activism. The deeper problematic of course is the perplexity of neo-Marxism upon the collapse of existing socialism. What has been gained, in the meantime, is a cultural turn and epistemological reflexivity; what is missing, in adequate profile, is an alternative political economy.

The basis on which social movements mobilise is often threat hence the project is to erect barricades against inroads into local or national moral economies. In a worst-case scenario, it is a matter of uniting the losers in social and economic development, those left with the short end of the stick. Beyond the short term, what is the outlook for the sustainability and growth of congregations of losers? First, the losers tend to quarrel among themselves indefinitely, preoccupied with conflicts over resource niches and survival politics, and divided along gender, regional, ethnic, religious or ideological lines. Second, they are bound to the winners by multiple strings of clientelism. Third, they are often perceived as irrelevant other than as a minor local nuisance because usually they hardly count in terms of numbers, and still less in terms of political proposition, for their concerns tend to be backward and inward looking. If this sounds familiar, it is in many respects a replay of anti-capitalist struggles, but now under vastly different circumstances.

In order to step out of this cul-de-sac, it is important to transform loser programmes (defensive, reactive, backward, inward-looking) into winning programmes (forward, proactive, outward-looking). The second step would be to combine—at least in terms of political vision, and in organisational terms to the extent that it makes practical political sense—initiatives towards local empowerment and national reform with global reform. What is missing in this equation so far is a middle ground which intellectually, politically and institutionally bridges the span between local struggles and global reform, between local alternatives and global constraints. Anti-development thinking militantly repudiates the possibility of such a middle ground, and alternative development thinking, while ambivalent on the desirability of such connections, fails adequately to deliver them.<sup>15</sup>

One such middle ground is the human development approach. The importance of human development is that it connects the 'soft' social agenda with 'hard' economic interests. In a brief time span, since 1990 when UNDP published the first *Human Development Report*, human development has become the major policy orientation and significant intellectual synthesis in development thinking. Unlike alternative development, which has found little institutional support except in local niches and among NGOs,<sup>16</sup> human development has found institutional backing in UN and World Bank circles and developing country ministries, to the point of changing the mainstream understanding of development. The human development approach seeks to span the development spectrum from human scale local development to structural reform.<sup>17</sup> A limitation of human development is that, at its narrowest, it is a human capital strategy of the state supplying the market with packaged human skills. In that human development is in principle concerned with *individual* capacitation its roots are in liberalism and neoclassical economics. The Human Development Index measures individual life expectancy, education and income, aggregated on a country basis. Human capital is a vital nexus between equity and growth—a site where

social interest and corporate interest meet and can be mediated by government authorities. Education, health and housing policies thus become not merely welfare provisions but supply-side inputs into productivity.

This, however, is not the only place where social and corporate agendas meet. Social capital, in denominations such as institutional densities and civic participatory society, is equally important. This concerns the question of the social and political embeddedness of markets, which is explored in the sociology of economics, associative economics and in the extensive literature on local economic development and industrial districts, although it has much wider ramifications, for instance with regard to democracy. Like human capital, social capital can be a meeting place of social and corporate interests, the basis for a social market approach. Further along the road, the human development approach may be opened up and extended in a social framework: not in the sense of social welfare but in the sense of social development; and not simply in the sense of tidying up after the market, but in the substantive sense of rethinking what markets are in the first place.<sup>18</sup>

### **Empire and emancipation**

In order to make explicit what is distinctive about the present arena of globalisation and emancipation it may be worth looking back at the past arena of empire and emancipation. Empire (colonialism, imperialism, new imperialism) was fundamentally *political* in that it was driven and orchestrated by states; it was *centred* in that by and large it was directed from the imperial metropolises; and *territorial* in that it was framed by geopolitical and strategic objectives. This is not to say that other elements—economic, cultural, local—did not come in, but they generally had to pass through the nodes of state-centred decision making and geopolitical ambition. With regard to the new imperialism of the late 19th century, a 'pericentric' theory could make sense because the impetus of empire building was territorial, pre-emptive and competitive. Imperial grandeur and *mission civilisatrice*, prestige and white man's burden, clothed imperial statism in cultural garments.

On the global canvas, the great emancipation movements at the time were those of the working class, women, oppressed minorities and the colonised peoples. These gave rise to a momentum of democratisation, social reform, political revolution and decolonisation, which at times resulted in a confluence of anti-capitalist and anti-imperial struggles. Several of these logics continued to be in operation in the bipolar world of the Cold War. Geography mattered in 'spheres of influence', and so did politics and ideology, affecting the way states aligned themselves in relation to the rival hegemonic systems of Washington and Moscow. The confluence of the Vietnam war, the civil rights movement and May 1968 was a conjunction of multiple struggles. There are now attempts to rebuild the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist coalition, but given fundamentally different circumstances this cannot but create the impression of radical nostalgia politics.

Empire and emancipation have been part of a globalising momentum and stages in the historical trend of globalisation, but there are marked differences



between imperialism and globalisation. Contemporary globalisation—if for now we focus on economic globalisation because it is in the forefront of contemporary globalisation—is *firm-centred* rather than state-centred, which in effect means it is *decentred*; and *detrterritorialised* in that it takes place in virtual space as much as in actual places. The hyperspace of international finance and 24-hour electronic trading, the ‘virtual company’ as a combine of shifting corporate elements, financial links and supply lines, are cases in point. There are multiple nodes of power to contemporary globalisation such as the G7, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Bretton Woods institutions, and Washington as super-power headquarters, but all of these are wired in turn to other nodes of power and influence, such as the international banking world, major corporations, international institutions and regional bodies, as well as transnational civil society organisations.

The general imagery of emancipation has been that of outsiders who want in and the underprivileged who seek transformation. Among the emancipatory movements have been, more or less successively, the bourgeoisie, Catholics, Jews, the working class, women, slaves, minorities, colonised peoples, dependent countries—all have supplied discourses and images of emancipation, discourses of revolution or reform. The overall character of emancipation has not changed; emancipation may be defined as collective actions that seek to level and disperse power and install more inclusive values than the prevailing ones.<sup>19</sup> But the forms and methods of emancipation have largely developed in national political frameworks. Colonised peoples confronted an international opponent, but their typical forms of organisation were national.

A related question is the relationship between emancipation and regulation. Regulation is a necessary element if we view emancipation not merely as protest but as transformation. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, modernity is based on the two pillars of regulation (constituted by the principles of the state, market and community) and emancipation (constituted by the logics of aesthetic–expressive rationality, cognitive–instrumental rationality and moral–practical rationality). In his view, the ‘collapse of emancipation into regulation symbolizes the exhaustion of the paradigm of modernity; but at the same time it also signals the emergence of a new paradigm’.<sup>20</sup> This perspective (in an otherwise innovative book) troubles me. It escapes me why emancipation should be grounded in rationality—is that not just an old Enlightenment habit? More importantly, as I see it, emancipation and regulation have all along been connected, in the sense that successful emancipation struggle translates into forms of institutional regulation that are more socially inclusive than the earlier ones. Thus yesterday’s emancipation struggle, if successful, yields today’s regulation and tomorrow’s legislation and institutionalisation. This should not be a cause for regret, nor need it occasion a new paradigm; it is rather the general, and on the whole desirable, course of affairs: over time social struggles may generate, or tend to generate, more inclusive political arrangements. It is only the very pure who bemoan this as ‘the standardisation of dissent’.

Recent discussions of emancipation have concentrated on the question of articulation among social movements and concerns: articulation among new social movements, and between old and new social movements, towards a

rainbow coalition politics, a politics of difference, an emancipatory pluralism, largely within local or national settings. The problem raised here is a different one. It concerns the articulation of emancipatory movements across different *levels*, across different contexts—local, national, regional, global, North and South. Presently there is a political gap from the local to the global which is only partially being filled by the stretch from local networks to planetary social movements, international NGOs or global civil society. This is not merely an institutional hiatus but as much a programmatic hiatus and a *hiatus of political imagination*. Beyond transforming loser positions into winning programmes (which involves coming to terms with the ideology and psychology of ‘winning’), the second general strategy consideration is combining local empowerment and global reform.

### **Global reform**

The question of global reform involves several elements: the need for global reform, the agenda and the modes of implementation of reform; elements which are only briefly addressed here, by way of evocation rather than discussion.

First, as regards the need for global reform, contemporary globalisation narrows the scope for local and national institutional regulation. The bottom line is that local or national social compromises can be boycotted by firms who can obtain better terms and opportunities elsewhere. Social and ecological dumping indicate the limits to local or national reform. Low bidder localities, offering the lowest regulations and the highest return on investment, win out in the global circuit; witness the appeal of minimum-regulation offshore and crossborder locations. Without foreign investment nations eventually wither for lack of growth, jobs, technology, innovation and financial flows. The familiar outcome is the dynamic of downward convergence, the ‘race to the bottom’: the generally downward trend of corporate taxes along with the upward trend of government incentives, restrictions on labour rights, social cutbacks, and the failure to set or enforce adequate environmental standards.<sup>21</sup>

The overall trend of growing capital mobility is tempered and modified by the ‘new localism’, the trend towards relocalisation, with firms seeking proximity to markets, high-skilled labour, suppliers and competitors. This counter-trend of ‘flexible specialisation’, however, tends to be mainly concentrated in industrial districts and technopoles in the triad zone or in growth sites within NICs. Relocalisation is a winning option that is delimited by the high entry threshold of infrastructure, human and social capital densities; by definition it is available only to a few ‘top locations’ and in the process drains resources away from the others that are left out. Thus it is another ‘island strategy’—in this case, a winning strategy—that does not alter overall economic trends.

The need for global reform follows from the transition from national capitalism to global capitalism. In the framework of national capitalism labour and capital could be disciplined and regulated because of the interdependence of capital and state. The national economy setting provided a nexus between enterprise accumulation and national accumulation, reinvestment, human resource development, taxation. Fordism has been one expression of this relation-

ship; Japanese 'corporate paternalism' is another. Regional regulation, as in the case of the European Union, is no safeguard against social dumping; witness the way the UK, which did not sign the EU Social Charter, has been attracting foreign investment.

In global capitalism there is still ample interdependence between capital and state, but now with a view to achieving global competitiveness. With the emergence of globally-wired firms the nexus between enterprise accumulation and national accumulation becomes contingent. New wealth is increasingly being generated—for instance in finance and telecommunications—across borders and outside the control of states. In the process the nexus between profits and taxation becomes tenuous, which feeds the fiscal crisis of government authorities, and in turn leads to declining levels of spending on human investment and receding levels of civic trust, which eventually not only erode demand (the Keynesian connection) but also the supply side of production.

A common historical pattern has been for politics to lag behind innovation, for technological change and enterprise innovation to proceed ahead of social and political regulation. This is not new; what is new is the scale on which this is unfolding, which is global, and the speed of innovation, which is telescoping. National capitalism could evolve social compacts clustered around the national economy; now it is a matter of developing social compacts around the global economy. The only way for localities, nations and regions *not* to be outflanked by the merciless economics of global competitiveness is by changing the rules of the global game itself. Since local, national and regional reform are ultimately checkmated and since what is at issue are processes of a global scope, what is called for is global governance. Increasingly in current realities no authority less than global level authority can issue effective regulation, that is regulation which is not neutralised and outmanoeuvred by corporate exit options. Thus we have effectively entered the epoch of global politics.

Global reform in this context is not viewed as coming *instead* of local, national and regional regulation; rather it plays a dual complementary role. On the one hand, global reform serves as a necessary condition which enables local and national reform by establishing a global framework for their possible efficacy; and on the other, it is *only* feasible and conceivable as emerging from and carried by local, national and regional reforms as building blocks towards global reform. In other words, this involves a double movement, from local reform upward and from global reform downward. The idea, at the end of the road, is not a global megastate, but rather a global 'managed pluralism', in which each level of governance, from the local to the global, plays a contributing part.

It is not that the world economy is presently unregulated. Casinos also have rules. The 1980s wave of national deregulation has installed a global institutional environment of minimal controls. Through the 'Washington consensus', the IMF and the World Bank, the WTO, and regional formations such as NAFTA and APEC, the neoliberal regime is gradually being extended. What is at issue is replacing neoliberal regulation with global governance on the basis of a reform programme which reflects broader political and social interests.

Present times are often compared to the 19th-century transition of industrialisation and laissez-faire capitalism, as a second 'Great Transformation', now on

a world scale. Ian Robinson introduces the notion of social democratic globalisation. His concern is 'to demonstrate to democratic publics that the neoliberal form of globalization is not natural, inevitable, or desirable. Success in this regard will undercut the hegemony that neoliberal ideas currently enjoy. Putting a simple, yet radical alternative form of globalization on the political agenda weakens the standard argument—"there is no alternative"'.<sup>22</sup>

With regard to an agenda of global reform, this may involve, in brief, with respect to the world economy, restrictions on international financial transactions in the form of a Tobin tax to inhibit speculation, and other forms of taxation; it may involve formulating a global development agenda and establishing a world development institution, possibly a combination of international financial and UN institutions; and establishing international labour protection standards and global environmental regulation, possibly as clauses in the WTO. With regard to global politics, a reform agenda may include steps towards global democratisation, possibly in the form of regional parliaments, global parties and reform of the UN.<sup>23</sup>

As regards the possibilities for the implementation of global reform, there is the problem that, because of their scope, such reforms are often thought of as out of the reach of ordinary politics. Yet this perception may be relativised by considering the precedents of global regulation achieved over the past decades. International law sets human rights standards, regulates the conduct of war, exercises control through the International Court of Justice, and regulates access to resources through instruments such as the Law of the Sea. International treaties and regulatory institutions operate in many fields—the International Energy Agency, the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, UN agencies and, in international finance, the Bank of International Settlements and the IMF. Global reform, against this backdrop, refers to the expansion of a global public sector which *de facto* exists in a sprawling patchwork of international legislation and institutions, intergovernmental, regional, national and local authorities, international professional and nongovernmental organisations. The global public sector's multilevel and intersectoral consultation and cooperation operates ahead of *de jure* regulation in terms of international law and institution building. Such arrangements as exist are referred to under in-between headings such as the 'internationalisation of the state' and 'governance without government', which themselves are signposts of our time of transition.

Social (poverty, exclusion) and moral (solidarity, compassion, decency) considerations are weighty, but by themselves probably do not provide a broad enough basis and coalition for reform. Indeed, the classic retort in the framework of neoclassical economics is that deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation will generate more jobs and thus, by courtesy of trickle-down, eventually benefit the poor. Hence moral considerations tend to fracture along the lines of paradigms and politics. It follows that the major grounds for global reform probably fall under the rubrics of threat and opportunity.

From the point of view of threat, global reform is primarily a matter of global risk management in the global common interest. The risks are thoroughly familiar. The ecological risks are too widely rehearsed to repeat here. Political

and security risks arise from instability on account of widening rich-poor gaps in combination with narrowing technology gaps (including military technologies). Civil war, ethnic and religious mobilisation, state disintegration, and migration and refugee flows are part of this hazard syndrome. Financial instability caused by foreign currency trading and speculation on a volume of traffic that is grotesquely out of proportion to international trade requirements is another growing factor of instability. The neoliberal regime may be in the short-term interest of the larger corporations but involves growing risks arising from market failure. In the advanced economies this takes the form of social polarisation through job losses and jobless growth, and insecurity for small and medium-size business; this may imply a growing mainstream constituency for global reform, at least with a view to containing the competitive threat from low-wage economies and the mobility of multinational enterprises. High-growth economies in East and Southeast Asia benefit now, but their economies are narrowly based and dependent on outside markets and technology, so that their long-term interest lies in global economic and political stability.

In the past, novel forms of regulation have been arrived at prompted by crisis, extreme or manifest risk, or in the aftermath of major upheavals such as war. The dialectics of disaster do not necessarily produce beneficial results. Out of the 1930s depression came Roosevelt's New Deal and the neocorporatist settlements of fascism and Nazism. Postwar reconstruction brought the UN system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the Marshall Plan, the framework for decolonisation, development decades and the Cold War. The question is whether current global dynamics and the diverse ways they are perceived are of such a nature that manifest risk generates sufficient pressure and hence convergence of dispersed interests for new settlements to be achievable.

A complementary case for global reform is in terms of opportunity. Global reform, in this line of argument, is not merely necessary in order to manage risk but desirable because it serves global common interests, including the interest of firms and high-growth economies. Making this case—which lies beyond this discussion—may involve elaborating the arguments of human development and social development on a transnational scale. The structure of rights which corporations require in order to operate globally must be devised to include social rights, not merely on the grounds of social justice but also on the grounds of social productivity. Generally it will be important for NGOs and civil society networks to make global reform proposals part of their agenda more, and more proactively, than is presently the case. Presently there is a political hiatus not only from local empowerment to the global level, but also between global reform proposals and local constituencies which are neither informed nor engaged. It is worth noting the rapidity of change in political attitudes even at the intercontinental level. Fifteen years ago the threat of nuclear war dominated the agenda of global concern and now it has virtually vanished. Thanks to a convergence of various circumstances it has been possible to find a workable institutional fix. Presently globalisation angst is a growing sentiment. Finding a global institutional fix is thinkable, even though without doubt it will involve long-lasting

jostling and negotiations among multiple political and social forces of an unprecedented complexity.

In my view, emancipation in the context of globalisation means local empowerment and global reform on the basis of inclusive political values and arrangements. What is needed is not merely resistance but transformation; not only local empowerment, but global empowerment. The point is not to create new radical postures but to set forth a global politics of inclusion in which the language of the market meets with the aims of human and social development. Implementing such an agenda would involve greater cooperation among civil society organisations, including labour organisations; and where politically relevant (depending on the character of local and state government, and the culture of enterprise), developing synergies between civil society, government and firms. What would be most constructive politically would be the development of multilevel connections from local organisations to international networks all lobbying for and generating global reform.

### Notes

1. R. Petrella, 'Globalisation and internationalisation: the dynamics of the emerging world order', in: Robert Boyer & Daniel Drache (Eds), *States against Markets: The Limits of Globalisation* (Routledge, 1996), p. 79.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
3. Robert W. Cox, 'A perspective on globalization', in: J. Mittelman (Ed.), *Globalization: Critical Reflections* (Lynne Rienner, 1996), p. 26.
4. J.H. Mittelman, 'The dynamics of globalization', in: *ibid.*, p. 18.
5. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 'Delinking or Globalisation?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (1994), pp. 239-42.
6. Petrella, 'Globalisation and internationalisation', pp. 78-9.
7. E.g. S. Latouche, *In the Wake of the Affluent Society: An Exploration of Post-Development* (Zed, 1993).
8. I. Muto, 'For an alliance of hope', in: J. Brecher, J. Brown Childs & J. Cutler (Eds), *Global Visions* (South End Press, 1993), p. 155.
9. F. Cheru, 'New social movements: democratic struggles and human rights in Africa', in: J.H. Mittelman (Ed.), *Globalization*, p. 159.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
11. Jon Friedmann, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development* (Blackwell, 1992).
12. Cheru, 'New social movements'.
13. Walden Bello, 'Equitable and sustainable growth in the Philippines in the 1990s', in: J. Cavanagh, D. Wysham & M. Arruda (Eds), *Beyond Bretton Woods: Alternatives to Global Economic Order* (Pluto, 1994), p. 13.
14. Muto, 'For an alliance of hope', p. 155.
15. Discussed in Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative Development, Post-Development, Reflexive Development*, Institute of Social Studies Working Paper 229, The Hague, 1996.
16. See B. Sanyal, 'Ideas and Institutions: Why the Alternative Development Paradigm Withered away', *Regional Development Dialogue*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1994), pp. 23-35.
17. See M. ul Haq, *Reflections on Human Development* (Oxford University Press, 1995).
18. I am developing this argument in 'Equity and Growth Revisited: A Supply-side Approach to Social Development', *European Journal of Development Research*, forthcoming.
19. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 'Emancipations, modern and postmodern', in: Nederveen Pieterse (Ed.), *Emancipations, Modern and Postmodern* (Sage, 1992), p. 32.
20. B. de Sousa Santos, *Toward a New Common Sense: Law, Science and Politics in the Paradigmatic Transition* (Routledge, 1995), pp. 2, ix.
21. See e.g. J. Peck & A. Tickell, 'Searching for a new institutional fix: the after-Fordist crisis and the global-local disorder', in: A. Amin (Ed.), *Post-Fordism* (Blackwell, 1994), pp. 280-315.

22. I. Robinson, 'Globalization and Democracy', *Dissent* (Summer 1995), pp. 373–80.
23. On global reform, see e.g. Report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood* (Oxford University Press, 1995); Richard A. Falk, *On Humane Governance: Towards a New Global Politics* (Polity Press, 1994); Group of Lisbon, *Limits to Competition* (MIT Press, 1995); David Held, *Democracy and Global Order* (Polity Press, 1995); and Hazel Henderson, *Building a Win-Win World* (Berrett-Koehler, 1996).