

Why are People Protesting Globalization?

2nd Edition



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Overview to the second edition

The term “anti-globalists” is a convenient, yet largely misleading, moniker for those who protest some or all aspects of globalization. People who find things in globalization to protest - both in the streets and through other means - reflect diverse interests and ideas. Advancing the impression that street-protesters represent a unified movement or cause is a distortion. Protesters range from anarchists to the AFL-CIO. In the United States, popular awareness of the movement grew out of the Seattle protests in 1999. In Europe and elsewhere, people have been protesting some of the ills associated with globalization for much longer. Those who assembled in Seattle, and protesters who have demonstrated at subsequent meetings of international organizations, associate “globalization” with many different kinds of issues. They advocate a range of actions and reforms: from the modest (altering development policies) to the radical (disband the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization).

Protesters are well aware of the differences in their interests as they gather at international meetings. Some have tried to salvage the media label by declaring themselves to be “anti-corporate globalization.” Others have tried to turn the tables and declare themselves as “pro-justice.”

By now, many people are familiar with events like the “Battle of Seattle,” and are able to vividly recall the images of protesters demonstrating against the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF, and battling with police. This paper, entitled “Why are People Protesting Globalization,” has been recently updated (spring 2002) and attempts to clarify the issues and aspects of globalization that protesters find objectionable. It also attempts to provide a reasonable summary description of why people are protesting. A listing of websites at the end of the document provides links to more detailed information.

The economic, political and social forces driving globalization are complex: integration, acceleration, transaction, concentration, and standardization are interacting on a global scale. Establishing a clear connection between these forces and the maladies cited by some critics can be, at times, elusive. As such, alternative policies and approaches that could effectively remedy problems are neither easy to design nor easy to implement. To explore this idea more thoroughly, “Why are People Protesting Globalization” will become Part I of a four-part series on global policy. Part II will be a report entitled “Reforming Globalization.” It will examine in greater detail the proposals submitted by critics to expand access to the benefits of globalization and minimize its ill-effects. Part III will take stock of different forums and debates held recently along the theme of global policy. Part IV will be a collection of short policy papers, attempting to extrapolate the best-argued policy alternatives to the current state of globalization.

In the current document we do not attempt to address all of the complexities and nuances raised by the protesters. On the contrary, we have tried to distill the issues raised by the protesters to their essential claims and calls-to-action. We have tried to be faithful to the arguments put forward by protesters without judgment. In revising this paper for the second edition, it became increasingly clear that (potentially healthy) divisions within the “anti-globalization” movement are making our system of classification more and more difficult to apply. For example, the general theme of “environment” has come to mean very different things for several groups. The complexity lies in the fact that protest techniques and policy suggestions are very different and at times in conflict. Recent protests in Genoa (Italy) and Quebec (Canada) provide good examples of this. Not only did some groups make conscious decisions to stay clear of the “front lines,” but others did not attend the protests at all, not wanting their groups to be associated with the violence that was expected. It remains to be seen as to what will develop as a result of this division.

Important too is the fact that very different policy alternatives are being put forth today. No longer can the allegation be made that “anti-globalization” protestors are failing to put forth viable policy options (if ever it could). Today, there are a wide variety of policies coming to the forefront of the debate. We attempt to give a few examples of this in this paper, but will fully explore this issue in “Reforming Globalization,” or Part II of our globalization series.

So much more could be said about these topics. We hope this background document provides a useful beginning for those who wish to learn more about why people are protesting globalization.

Why protest free trade?

Anti-globalization organizations, such as Our World Is Not For Sale, are opposed to increasing free trade because they suggest that rampaging capitalism is harmful and unfair. Some organizations argue that because free trade by definition involves competition, this necessitates winners and losers. According to their view, trade liberalization causes the marginalization of impoverished and vulnerable groups. Developing countries, especially those in Africa, lose from free trade because they have a weak position in the international trading system.

Some protest groups, such as the People's Global Action, are opposed to all free trade agreements, including NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), and MERCOSUR (el Mercado Común del Sur). In addition, the People's Global Action strongly opposes the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI). They argue that the MAI threatens the legitimate sovereign right of peoples to determine their own economic, social, and cultural policies.

Most recently, at the FTAA (Free Trade Association of the Americas) meetings in Quebec (April 2001), organizations such as Common Frontiers, the Anti-Capitalist Convergence, and representatives of the Boston Global Action Network protested the ills of free trade. Some of the issues that they suggest are of deepest concern are increased environmental destruction, cultural erosion, decreased democratic rights, and a lack of transparency in public institutions.

The culprits in the eyes of the protesters

As the "Battle of Seattle" in 1999 demonstrated, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is contemptuous in the eyes of many anti-globalization groups. For these groups, the WTO relentlessly pursues the expansion of free trade as an end in itself, with little consideration given to its possible ramifications on society. According to Global Exchange, the WTO has established a legal system that enshrines free trade above "the interests of local communities, working families, and the environment." As such, they argue, the WTO systematically undermines democracy around the world.

According to the Forum of the Southern African People's Solidarity Network, the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) opens up vital infrastructure services, such as electricity and water, to the threat of competition. Ralph Nader has described the WTO as a system of "trade *uber alles*."

Other organizations or communities involved in free-trade issues that have found themselves at the center of protest include the FTAA, NAFTA, ASEAN, and MERCOSUR organizing bodies.

The alternatives that are being suggested

Many groups, such as Our World Is Not For Sale and the International Forum on Globalization, are calling for a total halt to further WTO expansion. Anti-free-trade groups often believe that there are certain goods and services that should be excluded from free trade agreements, such as health, education, and energy distribution. In addition, these groups believe that trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) should be removed from the jurisdiction of the WTO.

Why protest rigged markets?

International economic bodies such as the WTO claim to be expanding global free trade. However, according to many anti-globalization groups, such as the International Forum on Globalization, it is fiction: the current organizing principles of the global economy, and its regulatory institutions, are narrow and in the interest of a minority of wealthy Western nations.

The International Forum on Globalization contends that rigged trade in favor of wealthy Northern countries is leading toward increased economic colonization of Southern countries.

According to the Focus on Global South group, the "consensus" model of decision-making within the WTO means that the opinions and needs of developing nations are generally sidelined or ignored.

Moreover, protesters claim that the impact of globalization is uneven. Wealthy developed countries have experienced benefits of globalization such as increasing flows of foreign direct investment. According to a recent article in *West Africa Review*, foreign direct investment inflows into Africa have increased only modestly, from an annual average of almost \$1.9 billion in 1983-1987 to \$3.1 billion in 1988-1992, and \$6 billion in 1993-97.

The culprits in the eyes of the protesters

Enemy number one is, again, the World Trade Organization; viewed as dominated by the interests of wealthy nations. The claim is made that wealthy Western nations are able to dominate the WTO because beneath its democratic façade, decisions are actually taken by "consensus" in non-transparent backroom sessions. Global Exchange reports that only 20-30 key countries generally attended meetings of the WTO in Seattle in 1999. This meant that the representatives of over 100 other countries were usually not even in the room.

Protesters also charge that many Western governments have deliberately rigged trade in their own favor. This is said to be particularly true in agricultural goods, as they have been excluded from international trade agreements. According to Oxfam, trade restrictions imposed by wealthy nations cost the developing world \$2.5 billion each year.

Most recently, protests surrounding the Davos group have also begun to attract media attention. The Public Eye in New York led a teach-in during the recent World Economic Forum in New York. They argue that governments must have a more active role in ensuring that transnational corporations become more transparent and responsible.

The alternatives they suggest

For the International Forum on Globalization, and many other anti-globalization groups, the decision-making process of the WTO needs to be democratized in order to combat the domination by wealthy nations of international trade agreements. One suggested reform is for decisions in the WTO to be taken according to majority voting, rather than the current "consensus" model. This would allow the opinions of representatives of the developing world to be better represented.

Why protest the power of the international financial institutions?

Anti-globalization protesters believe that the governing institutions of the global economy have become too powerful, and are negatively impinging upon the ability of individual sovereign nation states to set their own policies. The International Forum on Globalization contends that the power of nation states to determine their own futures has now been transferred to global and transnational institutions.

According to Global Exchange, the WTO is now the most powerful legislative and judicial body in the entire world. Unlike United Nations treaties, the rules and rulings of the WTO can be enforced through sanctions. Also, the World Bank and IMF have become the world's largest public lenders.

Many groups suggest that the power and size of the top international financial institutions is harmful to developing nations. According to the Mobilization for Global Justice group, over the past two decades the policies of the IMF and the World Bank have contributed to rising debt, unemployment, and poverty for the Third World. These international financial institutions force developing countries to adopt economic policies that are to their detriment. A common example used to support this claim is coffee. The World Bank encouraged many developing countries to grow coffee, which led to a surplus in the market. The world price of coffee dropped sharply and undermined the new and old economies based on the production of coffee growing.

According to the pressure group Environmental Defense, 134 ongoing World Bank projects are forcibly resettling 2 million people. For instance, in India, the World Bank is currently financing the Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada River despite years of massive local protest. The dam and associated canals are expected to displace a quarter of a million rural poor.

Other pressure groups suggest that international organizations such as the World Bank encourage developing countries to pursue policies with little consideration for their consequences. For instance, the World Bank lent money to Guatemalan farmers to increase the amount of beef they produced. This led to an export boom, but in the long run has resulted in a tremendous loss of forests, increasing rural hunger, and widespread pesticide contamination of local crops and the countryside.

Many protest organizations claim that the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) used by the World Bank and IMF are harmful to developing countries. According to the Whirled Bank group, SAPs often result in deep cuts in programs like education, health and social care, and the removal of subsidies designed to control the price of basics such as food and milk. In short, SAPs hurt the poor the most.

The Whirled Bank group has suggested that over the past two decades, the consequences of SAPs, (such as declining living standards) have led to demonstrations, riots, and political instability in Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Jordan, Mexico, Niger, Nigeria, Russia, Sudan, Thailand, Trinidad, Uganda, Venezuela, Zaire, and Zambia. Some observers have described these as the world's "hidden" protests against globalization.

The Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the IMF) have also occasionally intervened in the domestic affairs of recipient countries. For instance, in Kenya the IMF told the government that it would not approve a promised loan if the government gave in to a demand from striking teachers to raise their salaries to \$150 a month. Many groups suggest that these actions go beyond the mandate of the World Bank and the IMF and that suggest that domestic policy must come first.

The culprits in the eyes of the protesters

Here again, the WTO features prominently on the grievance list of anti-globalization protesters. The Sierra Club argues that the actions of organizations such as the WTO, and trade agreements such as NAFTA, have implications beyond trade. They place sharp limits on the ability of governments to legislate and regulate in the public interest. According to Corporate Watch, since the WTO was established in 1995, it has ruled that every single environmental policy it has encountered is an illegal trade barrier that must be eliminated.

As Friends of the Earth claim, long before the WTO became active, the World Bank and the IMF were exerting a great deal of control over the economies of developing countries. SAPs have been used to encourage the adoption of such Western economic policies as privatization and deregulation. According to Global Exchange, after 15 years SAPs have only successfully contributed to economic stagnation in Africa and Latin America. Citing a study by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Global Exchange contends that SAPs imposed at the beginning of the 1980s significantly contributed to a rise in global inequality.

The Whirled Bank group contends that the Bretton Woods institutions use "bullying tactics" on recipient nations to pursue policies such as privatization. As an example, they cite that in March 2000, the IMF threatened to cancel promised loans and sever relations with Moldova if it failed to privatize key agricultural sectors. Many groups opposed to the present power of international organizations also consider these groups to be unjust because their activities are inefficient and ineffective. Corporate Watch, for instance, contends that the World Bank has a 65-70% failure rate of its policies in the poorest of the world's countries.

The alternatives they suggest

The International Forum on Globalization suggests that the Bretton Woods institutions should not manage the global economy. Instead, world development ought to be monitored and regulated by the United Nations bodies that have experience with economic development policy in relation to a more specific social context. From this perspective, the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) ought to be strengthened, to give it jurisdiction over globalization.

Many anti-globalization groups also believe that the governing institutions of the global economy ought to be thoroughly democratized. If they cannot be, they must be replaced with new, global democratic bodies. The Alliance for Democracy believes that a "World Economic Parliament," and not the WTO, should handle international economic relations. Municipalities would elect this parliament wherever elections are possible, using the model of the European Parliament. A "World Economic and Environmental Court" would handle trade disputes.

Today, most groups considered to be in the "anti-globalization camp" do not recommend a total disintegration of the World Bank or the IMF. That said, there are many groups that support massive overhauls of these organizations. The Fifty Years is Enough group says that these changes should include: full public accountability and the participation of affected populations in decision making at the World Bank and the IMF; a shift in the nature of economic-policy reform programs and policies to support equitable, sustainable and participatory development; an end to all environmentally destructive lending and support for more self-reliant, resource-conserving development that preserves biodiversity; the scaling back of the financing, operations, role, and power of the World Bank and the IMF; the re-channeling of financial resources thereby made available into a variety of assistance alternatives; and a reduction in multilateral debt to free up additional capital for sustainable development.

Why protest environmental destruction?

Many environmentalists believe that globalization is environmentally destructive. According to the International Forum on Globalization, globalization is leading to the accelerated invasion of the earth's remaining wilderness, thereby destroying bio-diversity.

They argue that the increased movement of humans and products across the globe causes more of the world's resources to be consumed, more pollution to be produced, and more species to become extinct. For instance, to transport strawberries from California to New York on average requires 87 times more energy than the strawberries themselves actually contain. As far as threats to wildlife are concerned, the most common example cited is that of the sea turtle.

Many protesters contend that globalization of trade allows for the spread of genetically modified foods before their full consequences have been comprehensively investigated. According to Global Exchange, multinational corporations like Monsanto and Novartis, who have spread their biotechnology throughout the world, have exacerbated the irresponsibility and secrecy of food engineering.

The culprits in the eyes of the protesters

Environmental groups such as the Sierra Club believe that the WTO is weakening the ability of individual governments to protect their environments. Some demonstrators in Seattle in 1999 (and again Washington in 2000) dressed in turtle shells to protest against a ruling by the WTO that forced the US State Department to abandon rules protecting sea turtles. As documented by Global Exchange, US clean air standards, and European regulations against hormone-treated beef have also been dismissed by the WTO as trade barriers.

According to the Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy, the WTO is contributing to global warming. Yet decisions within the WTO are taken purely on financial basis, and the WTO is unconcerned with global warming issues.

The World Bank funds many infrastructure development projects in the developing world, lending money for such things as roads and dams. According to Friends of the Earth and the International Rivers Network, the World Bank and the IMF have yet to fully appreciate the environmental consequences of their actions. For instance, fewer than 20% of World Bank adjustment loans include any form of environmental assessment.

The Whirled Bank group contends that between 1992 and 1997, the World Bank spent 25 times more on climate-changing fossil fuels than on renewable fuel sources.

Opponents to the rapid spread of genetically modified foods are particularly hostile to a few multinational corporations involved in agricultural production, such as Monsanto. This agricultural giant has recently attracted a great deal of attention for its law suit against a Canadian canola farmer. Their claim is that he stole their seeds. His claim is that wind blew genetically modified seeds from one of their farms into his fields, where they started to grow. The farmer is arguing that he wanted nothing to do with this product as it will contaminate his organic crops, and is counter-suing Monsanto.

Also at fault in the eyes of protesters is, again, the WTO. They believe that agreements through the WTO have limited the right of individual governments to regulate biotechnology within their own borders. The concerns raised by protesters are that "...patenting allows industry to take control of and exploit organisms and genetic material as exclusive private property..." The result is a "re-colonization" of non-Western cultures, countries, and industries.

Movements like the North American Animal/Environmental Liberation Front (A/E LF) use "direct action" tactics on behalf of "animal liberation" and "earth liberation" against genetic research and engineering. The most recent targets have been a microbial and plant genomics research center in St. Paul, Minnesota and tree spikings in the Nez Perce National Forest in Idaho.

The alternatives they suggest

The International Forum on Globalization contends that the paradigm of government sponsored unlimited economic growth is blind to the concept of ecological limits, and therefore needs to be abandoned in favor of approaches that are more inclined towards what is known as the "precautionary principle."

Greenpeace, the Third World Network, GRAIN International, and several other organizations from around the world, believe that life forms should not be patented, and should therefore be outside of the jurisdiction of the WTO.

Vanadana Shiva, an Indian physicist, ecologist, activist, editor, and author of many books, has long pointed out the connections between indigenous culture and indigenous agriculture. Her policy suggestions include becoming less reliant on the products of multinational corporations, using local seed variations, and using more natural farming practices.

Why protest multinational corporations?

Many groups opposed to the current system of globalization, such as the International Forum on Globalization, believe that globalization is being led and dominated by a small group of large multinational companies. The size of huge companies allows them to bargain down the wages and living standards of their employees around the world.

Groups that campaign against globalization claim that the power of multinational corporations in the developing world can threaten the human rights of local indigenous groups. For instance, in May 1999 two Mexican farmers were arrested and tortured by local police on charges of growing marijuana. According to Amnesty International and the Sierra Club, these were trumped up charges. The farmers in question were actually guilty of leading a local environmental protection campaign, which was opposed to the actions of Boise Cascade. Boise Cascade is an Idaho-based timber giant, which began logging operations in Mexico when NAFTA created a more liberal trade environment.

Accusations of human rights abuses have also been levied against the Coca-Cola Corporation. Trade union leaders in the US are currently suing Coca-Cola for allegedly hiring right-wing death squads to terrorize workers at its Colombian bottling plant.

Many anti-globalization groups also believe that multinational corporations use their economic power to buy political power. According to People's Global Action, globalization is strengthening the influence of corporate lobby groups across the world. In The United States, according to CorpWatch, multinationals such as Nike have been actively involved in lobbying Washington against using trade policy to address workers' rights. Many anti-globalization groups protesting against the "sweatshop" labor practices are employed by garment multinationals, such as Nike and the Gap.

Citing a United Nations report, the Panos Institute argues that working conditions in many plants producing goods for multinational corporations in developing nations are scandalous. In many export zones in particular, they claim workers are treated as little better than slaves.

Individual cases are cited to prove the point. According to the anti-sweatshop campaign based at the University of Michigan, in the Dominican Republic workers are paid 8 cents to construct a hat that sells for \$19.95 in the US.

In Saipan, an American territory, Asian immigrant women work under a system of indentured servitude. According to Global Exchange, 45,000 women work in unsanitary barracks behind barbed wire where they sew clothes 12 hours a day, seven days a week, for retailers like the Gap and Eddie Bauer.

The culprits in the eyes of the protesters

Big name-brand multinational corporations, such as Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and McDonalds, are extremely unpopular with anti-globalization protesters. Consequently, whenever anti-globalization protests include more violent elements, branches of McDonalds and Starbucks are usually the first things to be destroyed.

The alternatives they suggest

Groups such as United Students Against Sweatshops have used humbling high-profile campaigns to draw attention to the pay and working conditions of workers in developing countries that manufacture goods for corporations such as Nike and Reebok. These anti-sweatshop groups have directed their campaigns at shareholders and consumers alike.

Most anti-sweatshop groups are not entirely opposed to the idea of large corporations employing workers in the developing world. However, they do generally believe that this should be done with consideration for local working conditions, and that the use of child labor ought to be banned.

Anti-sweatshop groups believe that most multinationals can easily afford to pay more to their employees in the Third World. For instance, citing economist Richard Rothstein, United Students Against Sweatshops believes that the wages of all workers in the Bangladeshi garment industry could easily be doubled without doing much harm to their employers' profitability.

Similarly, Global Exchange endorses the efforts of Cambodian garment workers making clothes for the Gap to raise their wages to a living income of \$60 per month. At present, these workers earn \$40 a month. They point out that in the year 2000, the CEO of the Gap, Millard Drexler, made over \$39 million.

Many anti-globalization groups also contend that an alternative to the dominance of large multi-national corporations is to be found in "fair trade." Small business associations such as the Fair Trade Federation use the Internet to sell goods manufactured in developing countries to consumers in the West. Fair trade rules guarantee that workers are paid a decent living wage, and that child labor is not exploited. Fair trade sales in the United States doubled last year to 4 million pounds. By 2004, that figure is expected to reach 25 million; this success has come in a global market that has seen the price and profits in the regular coffee industries fall dramatically.

Why protest Third World debt?

Many anti-globalization demonstrators contend there are both moral and pragmatic cases for the cancellation of Third World debt. For many anti-globalization protesters, it is immaterial who actually took out these loans in the first place. The people who suffer are always the same - the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world.

Debt repayments cripple the national finances of some developing countries. Congo, for instance, has annual debt service payments equal to 50 percent of its export earnings. Sub-Saharan Africa repays \$250 million of debt to the West each week. Servicing debt repayments also reduces the ability of developing countries to spend money on basic education. Oxfam states that in 22 impoverished countries, achieving universal primary education would cost \$1.5 billion annually. However, in 2001 alone these countries will spend \$1.8 billion servicing their debts. For example, in 2001 Benin will spend \$56 million on public primary education, and \$46 million on debt service. Cameroon will spend \$95 million on public primary education, and \$226 million on debt service. According to Oxfam, 19,000 people die every single day as a result of the debt crisis.

A second issue that is related to debt forgiveness is unfair trade laws, or anti-dumping laws. Some groups argue that the amount of money lost through uneven trade restrictions in the developing world amounts to a heavy imbalance in opportunity. According to Oxfam, the trading restrictions that the United States places on the developing world means that for every 1 dollar Bangladesh receives from the US in aid, it loses 7 dollars through such trade restrictions. The debt issues are therefore compounded by the unfair realities of repayment.

Bono, lead singer for the Irish pop band U2, has long been an advocate for the cancellation of third-world debt. Working with organizations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Jubilee 2000, Bono has been particularly active in Africa.

The culprits in the eyes of the protesters

Many campaigners for debt relief contend that Western countries have rigged global markets to such an extent that the amount the developing world received in aid/loans is far less than that which they extract through unfair trade. The largest and most powerful international loan agencies are the World Bank and the IMF.

In recent years, due to pressure from organizations and campaigns such as Jubilee 2000 and Drop the Debt, protestors claim several Western governments have cancelled the debts of many Third World countries. However, according to Drop the Debt, the IMF and World Bank have reduced debts by only a third. According to the Whirled Bank group, the poorest countries of the world owe

more money to the IMF and World Bank than to any other private or government institutions.

Many organizations campaigning for debt relief contend that Third World debt means that the world's poorest people suffer for the past mistakes of some of its wealthiest financiers. According to the Debt Channel, part of a non-governmental media network, many organizations and governments in the past made unwise loans for the wrong reasons. For instance, during the Cold War, the US government poured money into its ally, Zaire, even though it knew that President Mobutu Sese Seko was stealing most of it.

The alternatives they suggest

Many campaigners for debt reform are clear that they want total forgiveness of all Third World debt. Since Uganda had some of its debt cancelled, twice as many children are now attending primary school. Some groups believe that if debt is not canceled, then impoverished countries should simply stop making repayments.

Other campaigners believe that debt relief ought to be combined with "people's conditionality." According to this model, cancellation of debt must be combined with the governments of developing countries pursuing programs that benefit their citizens, such as increased education spending. Oxfam contends that debt relief ought to be deepened for those countries with good plans for poverty reduction. Also, no country should be allowed to spend more than 10% of government revenue on debt. Global Exchange has also raised the idea of a "debt for democracy" equity swap.

Argentina's recent failures to make payments on their debt have sparked concerns within some institutions that all of Latin America could be affected. It remains to be seen what effect this will have on the momentum of the anti-debt campaign.

Why protest financial speculation?

Anti-globalization groups such as Global Exchange consider currency speculation to be harmful because of the widespread human suffering it produces. Globalization of capital markets has increased currency speculation to its present \$1.5 trillion daily level (\$2 trillion according to the Third World Network). This has contributed to events such as the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, which then spread to Brazil and Russia.

When a nation's currency is devalued, the purchasing power of its citizens instantly declines. According to the Panos Institute, large-scale capital flight can also trigger mass unemployment. Following the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, unemployment in Thailand and South Korea more than doubled. Likewise, the Mexican peso crisis of 1994-95 is believed to have cost the country a million jobs.

The global financial market is now so large and volatile that the central banks of individual nations can no longer protect their currencies. Because these variables are outside national control, and because currency fluctuation so dramatically affects a nation's population, many argue that small nations can no longer protect their populations.

The culprits in the eyes of the protesters

Because much of the day trading goes on behind closed doors, many groups are unclear about where to place the blame in this category. Large US, German, Japanese, and Italian banks are often blamed for their roles. Many anti-global groups are hostile to the actions of more famous (and wealthy) international currency speculators, such as George Soros, founder of the Soros Foundation. Also, as Global Exchange contends, many groups argue that the IMF is inadequately prepared to regulate the activities of these speculators.

The alternatives they suggest

The most commonly proposed remedy to the global financial speculation that reigns at present is the "Tobin Tax." This is named after James Tobin, the Nobel laureate economist who first devised the concept. This would be a small international tax on short-term or overnight trades, and would shrink the volume of daily currency trading. The revenue raised from the Tobin Tax - some estimates suggest this could be as much as \$100 billion per year worldwide - could be used to address basic human and environmental needs.

According to the Third World Network, a new phenomenon is beginning in the developed countries: an explosion of "local currencies" - money that is not the national currency. This idea dates back to the Great Depression when there were thousands of local currencies in the US and other countries affected by massive

unemployment. By supporting the development of local money schemes, it is argued, we may in fact create the groundwork for the next system. Cities that are experimenting with this type of initiative include Toronto, Ithica, Salt Spring, and Edmonton.

Why protest gender oppression?

Globalization has had an exceptionally strong impact upon women across the world, especially in developing nations. According to the Feminist Majority Foundation, since the acceleration of globalization from the late 1980s, there has been a resurgence of sweatshops across the world, especially in Asia and Latin America. They claim that 90% of employees in sweatshops across the world are women.

Just as globalization is marking an increase in trade and the movement of people, there has also been an increase in the number of women being transported around the world against their will for the purposes of prostitution. The Swedish group National Institute for Working Life reports that, hundreds of thousands of women around the world live in conditions similar to slavery. They are locked up and sexually exploited. Without money, a passport or knowledge of the language or the country they are in, they are totally dependent on the people for whom they are forced to work.

Groups such as The Global Sisterhood Network contend that globalization has resulted in increased numbers of threats of violence against women in developing countries, led to the privatization of basic services like health care, and generally affected the insecurity and tenure of females.

Several groups suggest that third world debt also primarily harms the female populations of developing countries. According to Oxfam, of the 125 million primary school age children not enrolled in school around the world, two thirds are girls. The realities of funding choices within many highly indebted poor countries means a lack of education spending in many of these countries, caused partly by public finances being channeled into debt repayments.

The culprits in the eyes of the protesters

Along the theme of debt, many groups opposed to current trends within the global system believe that the repression of females is caused partly by Western governments and organizations that refuse to fully cancel Third World debt. These groups, as has been discussed elsewhere in this paper, include the IMF, the World Bank, large western banks, and several western governments.

Others also argue that women are repressed by the activities of multinational corporations. According to the Feminist Majority Foundation, virtually every single retailer in the United States has some links to sweatshop factories both at home and abroad. Manufacturers tend to employ female workers, because they can often offer women lower wages.

The unrest caused by the dissolution of the Soviet Union has increased the already large number of women being forced into sexual slavery. Several groups

are quick to point out the lack of financial assistance directed at the average people living in former the regions of the USSR. Tour operators offering cheap and illegal “sex vacations” have also been blamed for the increased trafficking of women.

The alternatives they suggest

In order for the working conditions of women in sweatshops to improve, many organizations believe that there needs to be stricter regulation of these factories. Also, anti-sweatshop legislation and labor protection must be enacted and properly enforced. Anti-sweatshop groups contend that the full enforcement of anti-sweatshop legislation requires that all governments monitor working conditions through the use of inspectors.

Many groups that campaign against the exploitation of women by sweatshops in developing countries also argue that full recognition of trade union rights is necessary in order to provide independent, non-biased monitoring of working conditions

Web Resources

The following web-sites offer more information about the issues and organizations that are involved in the discussion of globalization and why they are part of the growing movement to protest globalization:

[AIDC Main page](#)

[Alliance for Democracy \(National\)](#)

[Amnesty International](#)

[Animal Liberation Front](#)

[Anti-Capitalist Convergence - Washington, DC](#)

[ASEAN WEB](#)

[Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#)

[Boston Global Action Network](#)

[Bretton Woods Committee](#)

[Coalition Against Trafficking in Women](#)

[Common Frontiers Home Page](#)

[Convergence des luttes anti-capitalistes](#)

[Corporate Watch.org](#)

[DebtChannel.org](#)

[Environmental Defense](#)

[Fair Trade Federation](#)

[Feminist Majority Foundation](#)

[Focus on the Global South](#)

[Free Trade Agreement of the Americas](#)

[Friends of the Earth International homepage](#)

[Global Exchange](#)

[Global Sisterhood Network](#)

[GlobalizeThis.org](#)

[GRAIN Genetic Resources Action International](#)

[Greenpeace International Homepage](#)

[IMF -- International Monetary Fund Home Page](#)

[Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy](#)

[International Forum on Globalization](#)

[Jubilee Plus Home](#)

[Jubilee USA Network](#)

[Mercosur.com - Business and Information Community](#)

[Mindfully.org](#)

[Mobilization for Global Justice](#)

[NAFTA Secretariat - Secrétariat de l'ALÉNA - Secretariado del TLCAN](#)

[Our world is not for sale](#)

[Public Citizen](#)

[Public Eye on Davos 2002 \(New York\)](#)

[Sierra Club](#)

[Social Credit and Informal Credit Systems](#)

[Stop the FTAA](#)

[Students Against Sweatshops - Canada](#)
[SWEATSHOP WATCH](#)
[Third World Network \(TWN\)](#)
[Tobin Tax Initiative](#)
[United Students Against Sweatshops](#)
[West Africa Review article on FDI](#)
[Whirled Bank Group](#)
[World Bank Group](#)
[World Economic Forum - Homepage](#)

This list of web sites makes no claim to be comprehensive, and any further suggestions are welcomed.