

## Globalization and Resistance: An Anti-capitalist Manifesto

A.K.M. Jamal Uddin<sup>1</sup>  
Mohammad Moniruzzaman  
Khan<sup>2</sup>  
Debashis Kumar Kundu<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

*As a single phenomenon, globalization has enjoyed immense attraction through out the world. Along with this, globalization as process has tremendous impact on global economy, politics and society. In contrast, most of the countries are not receiving and consuming equal growth and opportunities of globalization (as some core countries of) West is getting. Therefore a huge number of resistance and movements are being observed since last few years/decades in developing nations. It has been argued that capitalism is used to promote disparity among the countries. In the era of globalization, when capitalism is being globalized, so that discrimination is also being globalized as consequences of crude capitalism. Moreover, a huge number of population from global South are resisting capitalism as well as globalization since they claimed both the process are more or less responsible for unequal global crisis. This paper examines the question whether the resistance to globalization is anti capitalistic by nature. To some extent, there are some common trends found in between anti-globalization and anti-capitalism movement.*

### Introduction

The pair of words globalisation and resistance has allured considerable attention in this day and age in the wake of huge discontents of global capitalist economy around the world. Conceptually, protest and social movements have become an essential part of resistance and collective repertoires and in due course, has been gaining substantial knowledge and scholarships in the area for retreating of globalization. Many scholars term these collective repertoires, protests and social movements against

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<sup>1</sup> A. K. M. Jamal Uddin *PhD*, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Moniruzzaman Khan, Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100

<sup>3</sup> Debashis Kumar Kundu, Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100

the economic character of globalization as an anti-capitalist manifesto. Indeed, this, as an intellectual and philosophical strand, may come close to the expression by Karl Marx (1848) of his thoughts of socialist transformation of society in the communist manifesto. However, there are many ways to understand globalization as a single phenomenon. Conceptually, globalization is a process which establishes the preconditions for regularized and relatively enduring forms of global interconnectedness (Held and McGrew, 2003: 3). As a single phenomenon globalization has enjoyed immense attraction throughout the world. If we consider the phenomenon from de-territorial perspectives, a definition would be made by the way what advocates for the world is becoming a single place in which different institutions function as parts of one system and distant people share a common understanding of living together on one planet (Lechner and Boli, 2004: 1). On the other hand, capitalism is now used frequently in describing a particular form of social and market system which is relatively new than other systems. Certainly, capitalism does not exist in all the regions of the world, although remains as the single most conceptual giant in the realm of academician. Capitalism is a system, where the means for producing and distributing goods—the land, factories, technology, transport system etc are owned by a small minority of people. This group of people is considered as the capitalist class. The rest majority of people must sell their ability to work in return for a wage or salary (who we refer to as the working class).<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to define the theme of resistance as because of it is constituted by repertoires whose meanings are specific to particular times, places and social relationship (Barker, 2006: 396). Another most significant way to explain resistance is essentially defensive relationship to cultural power that adapted by subordinate social forces in circumstances where the forms of cultural power in question arise from a source that is clearly experienced as external and others (Bennett, 1998: 117). Social movement is a sustained, organized collective efforts hat focus on some aspects of social change. A resistance movement is organized not to promote social change but rather to oppose it. In the United States for example a resistance movement has been formed to present changes in laws that guarantee women rights to abortions (Johnson 1995: 262). Historically, resistance has been portrayed through various forms of demonstrations along with the concept of protest and social movements. It has been argued that the crude expansion of capitalism in the north has promoted huge discontents and disparity among the population of the global south leading to the development of massive resistance in the vicinity of this part of the world. In this milieu, this paper attempts to find

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/articles/whatiscap.html> accessed on 29 April, 2009.

out the answer of a question whether the resistance to globalization is anti-capitalist by nature.

### **Anti-Globalization Movements**

“The Anti-Globalization movement has itself become a broad and varied global phenomenon. Globalization has provoked a global backlash, globalization has a particular meaning: It is primarily an economic force, emanating from the West that imposes unjust, unequal, and environmentally harmful capitalist system on the world to the detriment of local cultures and democratic self-control” (Lechner and Boli, 2004). ‘Replace Capitalism with Something Nicer’ the slogan painted on the lead banner at one of the major demonstrations in London on May Day 2001 provides a good summary of much popular anti-globalization literature (Brown, 2003). The section on anti-globalization movement argues the thesis that there is emerging a coherent movement against globalization that is beginning to identify the target of capitalist globalization rather than globalization as such. The many anti-globalization movements that have been fermenting over the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century were transforming themselves into a singular movement against capitalistic globalization (Sklair, 2002: 291).

Anti-globalization movements are the most global and transnational movements. These movements are well coordinated, well-informed and increasingly well-funded. (Hardling, 2000: 419). The resistance that the world has witnessed in forms of protests in Seattle, Davos, Melbourne, and Prague in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is all singular movements against Capitalism. Globalization can be connected to retreat of capitalism and capitalism is conceived as a structure of production dominated by processes of surplus accumulation. Globalization involves huge expansions of supra-territorial money and finance as well as creation of thousands of trans-border companies and strategic alliances, as well as appearance of innumerable trans-world products, as well as the emergence of major additional sectors of accumulation in the information and communication industries. Trends indicate that globalization has helped capitalism to become more widespread and entrenched than ever (Scholte, 2000:112).

### **The Transforming Pattern of Anti-globalization Resistance**

The transformation in the form of protest followed from the inception of the nation state, the development of capitalism and the mergence of modern means of communication. As Charles Tilly puts it: “as capitalism advanced, nation states became more powerful and centralized local affairs and nearby patrons mattered less to the fates of ordinary people. Increasingly, holders of large capitals and national power made the

decision that affected them. In response to the shift of power and capital ordinary people invented and adopted new forms of action, creating the electoral campaign, the public meeting and other elements of newer repertoire” (Tilly 1986: 395-6). The various unconventional forms of participations are ordered along a single continuum from least to most extreme. This continuum is marked by several thresholds. The first thresholds indicate the transition from conventional to unconventional politics. Signing petitions and participating in lawful demonstrations are unorthodox political activities but still within the bounds of accepted democratic norms. The second thresholds represent the shift to direction action techniques such as boycotts. A third level of political activities involves illegal but nonviolent acts. Finally, a fourth threshold includes violent activities such as personal injury or physical damage.

The processes of globalization are mainly economic in character. One half of the world’s largest economic units are constituted by 200 transnational corporations. They produce between a third and half of world output (Gideens 1989). What makes the contemporary manifestation of globalization notable is its scope and space. It is widely held that since the early 1970s we have witnessed a phase of accelerated globalization marked by a new dimension of time-space compression. This was propelled by transnational companies search for new source of profit in the face of crisis of fordism (Barker 2003). Beyond its economic character, globalization can be characterized by its cultural transformation. Globalization is not just an economic matter but is concerned with the issues of cultural meaning (Barker 2003). The idea of cultural imperialism also has strength where people are denied a cultural experience; that is, where particular social groups or local concerns fail to be represented in media as a result of multinational control of the economic of the production (Barker p.177). However, recognition of imbalance or loss is not the same as viewing the process of globalization as a one way process of imperialism. As Tomlinson argues: ‘the effects of globalization are to weaken cultural coherence in all individual nation states, including economically powerful ones – the imperialist powers of previous era’ (Tomlinson 1991:175). On global scale, capitalism has triumphed. It is to suggest that capitalism has achieved global hegemony as well as New Social Movements (NSM) as pressure groups.

In globalized economy the corporate globalization generates a range of resistance that has developed a counter hegemonic politics based in the right to live by values other than those of the market. Grassroots movements assert cultural diversity as world historical relations and human rights embodying ‘cosmopolitanism localism’ (Sachs 1992: 112). The anti market rule movement is most evident in global south where the tradition of the commons is more recent and where the empire has no

cloths. When we rose up against national government, we found that it did not exist. In reality we were up against financial capital, against speculation and investment which makes all decisions in Mexico as well as Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, the Americas – everywhere’ (Quoted in Starr 2000: 104).

Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1979, 1983, 1984) has explained the global inequality using the model of ‘capitalist world economy’. The term ‘world economy’ in his word suggests that the prosperity or poverty of any country is the product of global economic system. He defined the rich nations the ‘core’ of the world economy. According to Wallerstein, the world economy benefits rich societies (by generating properties) and harm the rest of the world (by penetrating poverty). The world economy thus makes poor nations dependent on rich ones. This dependency involves three factors: narrow export oriented economics, lack of industrial capacity and foreign dependence of the poor nations. Globalization only enhances this dependency on to its process from core countries to the rest of the world. Indeed protest and social movements became regular phenomena to the on set of this global capitalism.

Table 1: Anti-globalization Demonstration Matrix

<b>Place of protest</b>	<b>Global Institutions</b>
Berlin1988, Germany	International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Madrid 1999, Spain	World Bank (WB)
J18, London, 1999, UK	J 18
Seattle/N30, 1999, USA	World Trade Organization (WTO)
Washington A16, 2000	International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB)
G8 Summit, Genoa, Italy, 2001	Group of Eight (G8)
Washington G7, 2002	International Monetary Fund (IMF)

*Source: Data have been compiled from different newspapers*

### **Remaking of Globalization Machine**

The first tenet of economic globalization, now designed, has a need to integrate and merge all economic activities of all countries within a single, homogenized model of development i.e. a single centralized system. The second tenet is that primary importance is given to the achievement of even more rapid, and never ending corporate economic growth- hyper growth- fueled by the constant search for access to natural resources, new and cheaper labour sources and new markets. A third tenet concerns privatization and commodification of as many traditionally and non-commodified nooks and crannies of existence as possible- seeds and

geans for example. A forth tenet of economic globalization is its strong emphasis on a global conversion to export-oriented production and trade as an economic and social nirvana (International forum on globalization in Lechner and Boli, 2004). The gradual but seismic upheaval in the world economy of the last 20 years has generated mass anxiety. Foreign direct investment flows averaged \$115.4bn a year in the late 1980's. By 1999 they had reached \$865.5bn (Hardling, 2000: 419). The centers of power in the world economy are capitalist states- states in which capital economic enterprise is the chief for of production .Nation states are principal 'actors' within global political order; corporations are dominant 'agents' within the world economy. In their trading relations with one another and with states and consumers, companies depend upon production for profit. Hence the spread of their influence brings in its train a global extension of commodity markets including money markets (Giddens, 2004: 65).

### **Globalization and Capitalism**

Globalization has spurred the growth of consumer capital through the process of consumerism—much of it are related to global products and brands such as Nike, GAP; it has extended the range of industrial capital. The growth of supra-territoriality has expanded the scope of financial capital. Global banking, global securities and global desiccatives business have hugely increases both the volume and variety of finance instruments that serve as channels of accumulation. Globalization has encouraged the spread of comodification into new areas involving information and communications, helping to develop information capital. As a result, more economic activity than ever has acquired a capitalist logic, high respect of organization, globalization has yielded much -enhanced accumulation through offshore centers and trans-border companies. Globalization has played an important role in redistributing the relative weights of accumulation away from 'merchandize' (commercial and industrial capital) towards 'intangibles' (finance information and communication capital (Scholate, 2000: 112).

An important part of economic globalization today is the increasing dispersal of manufacturing processes into many discrete phases carried out in many places (global community chains). Modern industry is intrinsically based on division of labour on the basis of regional specialization, type of industry, skills and raw materials. Today, there is global division of labour, which has implications of global inequalities between more and less industrialized areas in the world (Giddens, 2004: 65). Being no longer so dependent on the production of one factory and one work-force gives capital a distinct advantage, particularly, against the strike weapon that once gave tremendous negative power to the working

class. The global division of labour builds flexibility into the system so that capital can migrate anywhere in the world to find the cheapest reliable efficient source of labour. At the level of production process, globalization capital has defeated labour (Sklair, 2002: 278). Free entry of goods (particularly consumer goods) from abroad is frequently a contentious feature of global trade. This system allows the unrestricted entry and exit of massive amounts of speculative capital into and out of Third World countries, which then effectively dictates their economic policy. Using the threat of capital flight as a lever, international capital insinuates itself deeper and deeper into these economies. Giant transnational corporations are taking control of their essential infrastructure and natural resources, their minerals, their water, their electricity. The World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other financial institutions, like the Asian Development Bank, virtually write economic policy and parliamentary legislation. (Sklair, 2002: 278)

### **Impact of Globalization**

As a consequence of such trade, enterprises and industries have closed; millions of workers and farmers have lost their jobs and land. Once the free market controls the economies of the Third World they become enmeshed in an elaborate, carefully calibrated system of economic inequality. Western countries flood the markets of poorer nations with their subsidized agricultural goods and other products with which local producers cannot possibly compete. Countries that have been plundered by colonizing regimes are steeped in debt to these same powers, and have to repay them at the rate of about \$382 billion a year. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer—not accidentally, -but by design. To put a vulgar point on all of this, the combined wealth of the world's billionaires in 2004 (587 "individuals and family units"), according to Forbes magazine, is \$1.9 trillion—more than the gross domestic product of the world's 135 poorest countries combined. (Roy,2003). The increased openness of the world economy, emergence of new industrial powers and the global economic slowdown have contributed to a substantial surplus productive capacity in a number-of-industrial sectors. For example, the automobile manufacture. Many of these firms must merge or even eventually shut down as the global supply of automobiles outruns effective demand. Global overcapacity in a number of economic sectors has caused some observers to declare that the world economy is suffering from a glut of manufactured goods, or what Marxists call "underconsumption"; this has led many observers to declare that global capitalism is in a systemic crisis requiring radical structural reforms. (Glipin, 2000:65). Since economic crisis and poverty are endemic to liberal global governance as with all

varieties of capitalism, the conditions for fundamental change are inherent in the contradictions of liberal global governance complex. As Mittleman observes, it is the contradictions and tensions within the prevailing order which are becoming 'engines of change (that) may eventually transform or even destroy the system, inaugurating a period of post-globalization'(Mittleman, 2000:242 as quoted in Held and Grew). Moreover, globalization, itself, results severe inequality among and within the nations which has different kind of forms. The effects like inequality arisen from crude globalization have been observed through out the human history in various phases. These scenario has been stated bellow:

Table 1: Summary of globalization's effects on world inequality

		Inequality between nations		Inequality within nations	
Epoch	Global inequality trend	Trend	Effects of globalization	Trend	Effects of globalization
1500-1820	Rising inequality	Rising inequality	No clear net effect	Rising inequality (Western Europe)	No clear net effect
1820-1914	Rising inequality	Rising inequality	Participants gain on non participating countries. Among participants, migration reduced inequality more than capital flows raised it. Free trade may have reduced inequality, with exceptions	No clear trend	Globalization raised inequality in the New World, reduced it in participating Old World nations
1914-1950	No clear Inequality trend	Rising inequality	Retreat from globalization widened the gap between nations	Falling inequality (in OECD)	No clear net effect
1950-2000, Esp. since 1970	Slightly rising inequality	Slightly rising inequality	Globalized trade and migration narrowed the gaps among participants. Non participants fell further behind	Slightly rising inequality (in OECD)	Globalization raised inequality within OECD countries. In other countries, non-participating regions fell behind
Overall 1820-2000	Rising inequality	Rising inequality	Globalized trade and migration narrowed the gaps among participants. Non participants fell further behind	No clear trend	No clear net effect

Source: Lindert and Williamson, 2003



Globalization has in a deep sense been a globalization of apartheid, workers and communities in the Third World tend to enjoy—fewer legal protections against the redundancy than those in the First World. Drawn by the unending quench accumulation and profit motive, globalization is restructuring the control over recourses in such a way that the natural recourses of the poor are systematically taken over by the rich and the pollution of the rich is systematically dumped on the poor 90% of historic carbon dioxide emissions have been by the industrialized countries. Resource and pollution intensive industries are being relocated in the south through the economics of free trade. The new global policies have accelerated and expanded environmental destruction and displaced millions of people from their homes and their sustenance base .The world's biggest polluters are the most developed nations in the world, the United Nations generates more than 275 million tons of toxic waste every year and is the leading waste- exporting country in the world. (Shiva, 2004: 424)

### **The Nature of Anti-Capitalist Resistance**

The resistance to the global expansion of capitalism has become a universal phenomenon at present. Let's have a journey to revisit the suicidal incidence of South Korean farmer Lee Kyung-hae while the World Trade Organization (WTO) summit was going on at Cancun in 2003. The banner slogan of the protestors against this Cancun Summit was: “We are all Lee, we are all Lee”<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, it was neither a murder nor a normal death. A huge number of commoners were showing banners, festoons, and raising slogans against globalization. Not surprisingly, each and every summit arranged by World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO) received global resistance particularly from global south along with some parts of north including USA. In reality, however, Lee's death has added a new as well as very much crude dimension in the history of resistance to the process of globalization and symbolically, it has posed an immense and direct threat to massive expansion of capitalism. However, Lee was a farmer; typically a man who dealt with subsistence economy and was peripheral by nature in the context of global economy and his position became under threat by the globalized economy. Finally, Lee was collapsed as a lonely soldier in opposing the frontier of

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Watts, *The Guardian*, Tuesday 16 September 2003, cited in <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/sep/16/northkorea.wto> accessed on 29 April, 2010.

globalization. Eventually, this event of death has raised the point that his sacrifice was not a single phenomenon rather resulted from the nexus of globalization, capitalism and resistance. In the end, the death of Lee became globalized; though resistance has gained immense publicity. In this context, it is necessary to understand the nature of resistance rather than a single incident of death to save the life of thousands of Lee.

The Anti globalization movement turns out to be a formidable movement, to be precise, a movement of movements. Anti Globalization activism is diverse and inchoate, without a unified agenda or traditional leadership (Hardling, 2000: 419) Representing a wide range of social movements and non- governmental organizations from anarchists to social democrats, the anti-capitalistic movement has evolved as a powerful reaction against corporate-driven and state promoted globalization. Coordinating both local and global action, the movement has made use of direct action, transnational campaigns and the politics of protests to bring the world's attention the subordination of human and ecological security to the operation of global markets. In the last few years, the summits of all major global and regional institutions have confronted mass street protests, including those of the World Bank, the IMF, the G8, EU and APEC (Held and Grew, 2002: 65).

The protest against the WTO in Seattle has now passed into activists' folklore, with the help of capitalist-controlled mass media, into the collective memories of people all over the world. The presence of hundreds of thousands of protestors confronting large numbers of heavily armored police forced the WTO to abandon the meeting and beat a

hasty retreat. This demonstration to opposition to capitalist globalization was rapidly followed in the first half of 2000 by tens of thousands of people protesting at the World Bank /IMF headquarters in Washington DC, and by about 2000 protestors who asked the leaders of the Asian Development Bank to leave Chiang Mai in Thailand. The focus then shifted to Melbourne, site of the World Economic Asia-Pacific Summit. This attracted around 5,000 protesters, and street battles erupted that's forced delegates to move around the city by helicopter. Later in September, 10,000 people demonstrated in Prague. The Leaders of the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2001, one of the loudest voices of capitalistic triumphal...massive police presence shut out thousands of protesters. (Sklair, 2002: 291). Economic colonialism through formal military aggression is staging a comeback. Iraq today is a tragic illustration of this process. The illegal invasion, the brutal

occupation in the name of liberalization. All this is being done under the charade of a sovereign 'Iraqi government' (Roy, 2003).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Globalization is the reality of today's world. As a result of globalization there is a global thinking, connectivity and network and so the connectivity and network encompasses the supra-morality of planetary and global consciousness. Assuming that the 'Global Man' has more or less conquered every space on earth, and is now advancing towards a collective conscience; one conscience, one trans-cultural consciousness, one humanity- the great human family. (Esteva and Prakash, 2004: 413). The world has transformed into a melting pot because of unprecedented thirst of capital, power and control. In the age of market economy, the turbo capitalism is the determinant of power and control. Along with this globalization is supplying fuel in mass expansion of capitalism. To scholars inspired by Marx, globalization is expansion of capitalist system around the globe. (Lechner and Boli, 2004: 55). In other word the idea of capitalism is being globalized, so that inequality and discrimination also. In this stage a huge number of resistances have been observed through out the world. For the protesters at G-8 summits, from Genoa to Gleeagless, or WTO meetings, from Cancun to Hong Kong, globalization is a political project promoted, sometimes coercively, by a global directorate of western powers and a trans-national elite class dominated by corporate sectors- the conspiracy- to the principle advantage of a minority of human kind (Held and McGrew, 2007: 137). The resistance globalization has been facing as this paper mentioned at the begging has a certain character which was and is undoubtedly anti-capitalism. Because Lee as a farmer raised his voice against the multinationals and big governments that control the WTO were pursuing a form of globalization that was inhumane, farmer-killing and undemocratic. This world should not enjoy any death body like Lee even if globalization has some positive effects.

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