Global Complexities and the Rise of Global Justice Movement: A New Notion of Justice?

S. A. Hamed Hosseini
Global Complexities and the Rise of Global Justice Movement: A New Notion of Justice?

S. A. Hamed Hosseini, University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia

Abstract: This article discusses the notions of justice underlying the ideological discourses and political practices in the so-called ‘global justice movement’. It also attempts to contribute to a sociological explanation of these ideas in terms of broader structural changes at the global level. In developing such an explanation, the article employs the concept of ‘global complexities’. It is argued that the ‘complexity’ of current global social changes and inequalities has necessitated the emergence of a new notion of justice (accommodative justice) within the movement. In fact, this new concept of justice has emerged from many activists’ experiences of and reflections on the complexities of globalization. As an illustrative example of such conceptual transformations, ACT UP, a grassroots HIV/AIDS advocacy network, is examined. Attempts to understand and theorize the movement’s conceptions of global justice have strong and constructive implications for both theories of justice and theories of global social change.

Keywords: Global Complexity, Global Justice, Global Justice Movement, ACT UP, Accommodative Justice, Recognition, Redistribution

Introduction

Concerned with global inequalities, a new wave of transnational activism has opened up prospects for reformulating social and environmental justice in 21st century. This new global resistance is shaped around a set of shared goals for advancing social, political, economic and ecological justice across the world although definitions of global issues may vary among the participant groups (della Porta 2007). The main concerns are related to the international financial institutions and trade agreements, related domestic and foreign policy changes, neoliberal financial policies, privatization, structural adjustment programs in the South, transnational corporations, and the recent war and peace issues (Broad 2002). Although a great number of massive protests across the world (especially in the West since the late 1990s) have given popularity to the resistance, the movement in fact is not limited to these events. The incidence of massive uprisings and protests has experienced ups and downs during the last decade. While the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the following sharp shifts in public discourses diverted the public attentions from the movement, it has been able to regain its potency once again, thanks to the rising disappointment with the exhaustive costly war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the recent collapse of giant capitalist institutions.

This growing transnational resistance has created new visions and new spaces for exchanging experiences in confronting the global agents of disempowerment and inequality. As Callinicos (2003: 15), a political theorist and socialist activist, mentions, the recent transnational movements are now motivated by a sense of the interconnection between an immense
variety of different injustices and dangers. The scholarly literature on the global resistance has been rapidly growing. A growing number of authors have identified the issue of justice as the core concern of many participants in the movement (Opel and Pompper 2003; della Porta 2007; Moghadam 2009, Hosseini 2009). Once labeled as ‘anti-globalization movement’ by mainstream media, now the movement is depicted more popularly with names like ‘global justice movement’ (GJM) that sound more promising and affirmative. However, little attention has paid to the definitions of justice adopted or developed by the main actors in the movement.

Is the movement in fact a plural space comprised of myriad local campaigns demanding for putting particular-localized modes of justice into practice or a cohesive global movement with a universal notion of justice? What concept(s) of justice can be attributed to the so-called global justice movement? How is justice understood in the movement when compared to the notions of justice which used to be embraced by the so-called new (or identity-based) movements (NSMs) like feminism or the so-called old social movements (OSMs) like many labor, socialist and anarchist movements? Is this a movement for redistributive fairness or recognition justice? To what extent are the complexities of global inequalities translated into the new conceptions of justice? Who are the most liable actors in the movement to adopt and call for the application of such notions of justice? In this article, I hope I will contribute to answering the above questions by drawing on: (1) a short critical review of mainstream justice theories; (2) a conceptual analysis of the notions of justice underlying some prototypical activist discourses and practices; (3) an argument about the complexity of global social changes and inequalities; and (4) an examination of a grassroots HIV/AIDS advocacy network (ACT UP) as an illustrative case study.

Global Oppositions to Global Injustices

The so-called global justice movement has not been created ex nihilo. Rather, it has ideological-experiential roots in both the so-called new Left middle class (such as green, identity-based, welfare, and cultural movements), old Left movements (socialism, unionism, and anarchism), and the most recent transnational protests and resistances. It consists of: single-issue protests (anti-sweatshops, debt relief, fair trade, AIDS, farmers, youth groups, etc.); larger activist networks (such as anti-war and human rights, advocacy networks, organized labor, international hunger and slum dwellers, Zapatista solidarity networks); infrapolitical everyday life resistances (as experienced by myriads of ordinary citizens, migrants, peasants and villagers in opposing adjustment programs in the Third World); INGOs (such as the Global Exchange, Focus on Global South, the Peoples’ Global Action against Free Trade and WTO, and many corporate watchdogs); and annual international and regional forums (like the International Forum on Globalization, the World Social Forum, and its local chapters).

Many in the movement have aimed to identify and oppose the major sources of inequality. Ayres (2004), in a brief review, shows how diagnostic and prognostic frames have come out of scattered resistances, and shaped inclusive master frames, critical of the whole process of neoliberal globalization. According to these frames, the free trade ideology undermines democratic politics and democratic identities. Insofar as an ideology legitimizes social inequalities and revokes the principles of fundamental social justice and security, it threatens the culture of democratic freedom. Many in the movement stand up against injustice and...
hegemony by questioning the legitimacy of such ideologies. However, it remains arguable if the movement has been able to develop a unique mode of conceptualizing and practicing justice as an alternative to mainstream discourses. Social movements can provide a breeding ground for new theories (of justice) even though they may not be explicitly articulated. Analyzing activists’ discourses, practices, ideas, and solidarities in terms of their underlying definitions and assumptions can help us extract such “direct theories” (Sturgeon 1995).

For instance, the second paragraph of the Call of Social Movements, issued at the end of the 2002 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, outlines an idealized perception of a specific mode of solidarity among actors within the global field of resistance who have been experiencing different but interdependent systems of disempowerment:

We are a global solidarity movement, united in our determination to fight against the concentration of wealth, the proliferation of poverty and inequalities, and the destruction of our earth. We are living and constructing alternative systems, and using creative ways to promote them. We are building a large alliance from our struggles and resistance against a system based on sexism, racism and violence, which privileges the interests of capital and patriarchy over the needs and aspirations of people. (WSF 2002)

This can be interpreted as a new stage for global resistance in which people’s experiences of injustice in different contexts can be heard, exchanged and compared; a new phase that represents a shift from self-interested and particularist movements, to flexible and adaptive cooperation with ‘others’, from fugitive events to flexible networks of solidarity, and from a negative to a positive position. All these mentioned happenings, their continuity, intensity, and cosmic spread, reflect a common concern about the growing global complexities and have implications for justice at the global level.

Towards an Integrative Theory of Justice?

A short review of major theoretical controversies over the definition of social justice can provide us with a basic framework for mapping the definitions of justice among the movement actors. Theoretical controversies can be roughly discussed in terms of: (1) the units of justice; (2) content of justice; and (3) the institutional bases of justice. In terms of the units, controversies have been shaped around the dualism of individual vs. collective (or liberty vs. equality). In terms of the content, redistributive (material-economic) justice has been considered as an opposite view to recognition (social-cultural) justice while in terms of the institutional bases, those who argue for the adequacy of national and local institutions are disputed by those who argue for the necessity of establishing new global rules.

One of the most important dilemmas for both liberalism and neoliberalism is the issue of balancing individual and community (society) in their definition of justice. Classical liberalism and libertarians equate justice with the sovereignty and autonomy of the individual rather than community and therefore fail to acknowledge preexisting sources of difference and inequality. The most basic ideal of liberal society is individual liberty. Individual liberty and social equality are held as conflicting ideals and therefore social inequalities are inevitable consequences of liberty as people are naturally different in terms of their abilities and merits. The only credible equality is the equality before law and rules of conduct. By affirming ab-
stract and universal concepts of justice around the negative rights to property and entitlements, (neo-)liberalism misrecognizes cultural and identity differences. Therefore, in terms of distributive justice, it endorses class differentiation as natural outcome of difference in individuals’ merits, and overlooks the recognitive dimension of justice.

Egalitarian liberalists like Rawls (1971), however, attempt to combine both individual liberty and social equality into one ideal by expanding the notion of justice beyond economy into political realm where individuals’ original position of equality is assumed. Although social and economic inequalities are inevitable, from a Rawlsian perspective, they can be arranged in a way that they benefit the least well-off (Rawls 1971: 302). Egalitarian liberalism, however, remains blind to cultural and social differences by keeping its notion of fair distribution away from what communities and people may believe as good. Egalitarian justice like the other forms of liberal justice transcends social, cultural and symbolic roots of inequality by stressing on a universal conception of human needs and rationality.

Quite contrary to the liberalist ideas of justice, a communitarian response to the dilemma of redistribution vs. recognition is to stress on cultural context and the values associated with common good. They believe that social justice is inextricably linked with shared identities like nationality, shared beliefs and ideologies, and public cultures (Kymlicka 1995, 2001). The endorsement of moral relativism by communitarianism requires a rejection of transcendental cosmopolitanism in favor a particularism (Okereke 2007: 45-7).

A new generation of justice theorists, such as Fraser (1995, 1997, 2005), Honneth (1995, 2001), and Young (1990, 2000), have argued for the reconciliation of recognitive and redistributive justice. For them, recognitions and misrecognitions, like racism, happen through social and cultural relations and therefore they are not simply limited to political and economic institutions. Therefore, recognition of differences is not only a primary good but also a precondition of entitlement. Realization of social justice requires examination of existing differences, privilege and oppression. Compared to reductionist accounts raised by liberalist and communitarianist views, such a theoretical endeavor for balancing between both allegedly conflicting aspects of justice must be celebrated as a significant advancement. However, a great body of these arguments remains highly sophisticated and abstract.

These integrative views, in order to defend the necessity, possibility and plausibility of establishing balance between redistribution and recognition, assume an analytical separation between economic, political and cultural realms. This assumption can be questioned regarding the nature of many current globalization processes. They argue that neither recognition nor redistribution can be reduced to one another as each belongs to a different realm with different mechanisms of regenerating inequality and injustice (Schlosberg 2004). Therefore, the intersectional nature of inequalities and intertwined causes of injustice have remained undertheorized in these integrative theories of justice. These theories rightly argue that an essential element of developing normative theories of justice is to analyze the actual roots of injustice in different contexts. But what I will define as the complexities of global structural changes have not been investigated adequately. Moreover, there is not consent about the applicability of these integrative theories of justice in a more global perspective. In the context of global justice solidarities, as Gould (2008) argues, “a multitude of difference comes to play” and this questions the reduction of cultural and identity differences. The following section will explore a new notion of justice in the movement which has constructive lessons for both academic theories of justice and theories of global change.
An Accommodative Notion of Justice

The first glimpses of global resistance against neoliberalism emerged with many scattered local and national conflicts over welfare issues and in opposition to new policy shifts towards structural adjustments in developing countries alongside economic deregulations in the North. Numerous studies of such dispersed pockets of resistance show that many contemporary social movements in varying degrees have raised issues about both redistribution and recognition (for instance, see Martin 2001: 361, on new welfare movements). Contemporary movements usually combine identity politics with social policy goals. Since the rise of neoliberal regimes and economic rationalization at the national level, the resistance against social policy changes happened to grow up in many local communities. Hence, strong links between the politics of recognition and their appeals for changes in distributional policies have surfaced and been identified by some scholars such as Taylor (1998) and Fraser (1995).

Unlike identity-based movements that usually aim to address and solve problems related to their own lifestyles, many in the GJM deal with problems which cross identity boundaries, while affecting their own lifestyles as well. This can be interpreted as the unique ideational feature of recent movements. An increasing number of counter-hegemonic discourses in the GJM usually deal with issues beyond both recognition and redistribution. In contrast to the new welfare and policy movements, current global concerns cannot even be reduced to a combination of the two. Rather, they carry a social and moral responsibility for the interests and recognition of the Other. This can be easily identified in, for instance, the civil rights of women and children from the South in the case of defending refugees, the rights of workers exploited in sweatshops in the case of anti-sweatshop movements, and the issues of unemployed people and global poverty in the case of the anti-debt movement.

Although the acknowledgement of social differentiations is important in the practical formation of ideas about justice in the movement, identity-affirmation is not an end in itself. The idea of justice has been redefined by many in the movement in accordance with both collective identities and the totality of a globalizing capitalist system at the same time. According to Burgmann (2003), the recent counter-capitalist movements, by targeting the ‘whole’ of globalization, question any postmodernist inspired skepticism about radical intellectual appeals for challenging the whole world system. How can the movement actors hold the significant position of identity-affirmation within their understanding of justice, while avoiding its implication for a paralyzing fragmented subjectivity? One solution is to attribute a broader, more inclusive, and ‘accommodative’ meaning of justice in these movements.

Although there is sufficient evidence to signify the emergence of new structural changes (della Porta and Diani 1999: 55), there is no evidence that materialist values have lost their relevance in resistance led by non-working class movements (Brooks and Manza 1994). The contemporary history of mobilizations in advanced societies, even during the 1980s, has witnessed the emergence of alliances between working class and community groups (see Burgmann 2003: 270-6, for some examples of the new patterns of alignment between unions and communities). Drawing upon two cases from the present context of struggles, i.e. the Community Unionism and British Firefighters’ Dispute, Edwards (2004: 114) contends that labor movements retain “a key role in generating a relatively autonomous space for public debate in advanced capitalist societies.” Besides, such cases bear witness to the uprising of many movements concerned with the quality of life and with the allocation of material rewards to different social groups (Brecher and Costello 1990). As Edwards (2004: 126) concludes,
rather “than old class conflict being divorced from the new postmaterialist concerns to reassert communicative rational action, they are fundamentally implicated in it”.

One way of understanding the movement’s conception of justice is to investigate the modes of solidarity in the movement in terms of their underlying assumptions. The growth of horizontal alliances, affinity groups, and collaborative networks across communities with different interests and identities point to a new tendency to go beyond the incompatible conceptions of social differentials – around issues like gender, race, cultural identity, individuality, and community – in establishing a flexible solidarity based on a collaborative inclusion of the Other into the definition of Self. In its *mission statement*, the Queers for Economic Justice, a non-profit organization promoting social justice in sexual and gender contexts, states:

> We are a multi-racial, multi-classed, multi-cultural group of people of diverse marginalized sexual and gender identities, as well as diverse ages, skills, educational levels, backgrounds and abilities  … We understand the interconnections between different oppressions that perpetuate economic injustice, and we work on multiple levels to eradicate them.

_(Queers for Economic Justice 2004)_

Contextualizing and operationalizing the *universal* values such as tolerance, justice, equality and those that are implied by human rights discourses, through *particular* debates is the major aptitude of the World Social Forum for synthesizing *universal*ity and *particular*ity. As reflected on the Forum’s website, the WSF 2005 started as the expression of world diversity, polyphony of voices that meet the universal wishes for tolerance, justice, peace, and equality (see WSF 2005).

‘Accommodation’ here is within the domain of groups critical of different forms of injustice caused by corporate globalisation, reflecting a foundational consensus with a creative approach to their contentions. It suggests that understanding problems like inequality must follow the lines of anti-dualist, anti-reductionist, and anti-hierarchical principles. This emerging notion of social justice (and democracy) requires affirming a few general principles:

- Inequalities at any level from local to global must be systemically addressed in relation to each other,
- Integrative visions of justice and equality ought to be articulated through freely exchanging ideas and experiences in autonomous and horizontally structured open spaces of action and deliberation,
- Material and post-material, economic and cultural bases of inequality, and recognition and redistribution issues are deeply interdependent, and none should be weighted over the other (both the life-word and system must be democratically restructured)
- The asymmetrical nature of globalization processes can only be effectively dealt with if subjects think and act as effectual *globally* as *locally*,
- All personal grievances and experiences of surrounding conditions must gain equal opportunity to be expressed publicly and all public issues must be taken personally, and;
- Neither revolution nor reform makes sense without developing relative autonomous spaces where actors can practice and examine their alternative ways of organizing social life.
Such a consciousness is best embodied perhaps in the principles of the World Social Forum – that any alternative must be democratic and have well-built commitment to shared dignity or rights; that it must take us away from the neoliberal, hegemonic world order, homogenizing consumerist culture, and corporate commodification. Although transnational solidarities, forums, and interactions carry many paradoxes, caused by persisting undigested experiences of the past practices, experiencing this uncertainty or confusion itself has resulted in the emergence of creative intellectual demands which convey an accommodative mode of conceptualizing justice.

Global Complexities as Structural Factors

The question I will be attempting to answer in this section is how we can explain the rise of such an accommodative notion of justice in terms of the major social changes in the current global context especially since the end of Cold War. Many European studies of the post-1960s Western social movements argued that due to main transformations in the nature of capitalism, i.e. a shift from an industrial to post-industrial society, a historical rupture could be identified in the politics of opposition. A significant decline of interest in ideology, politics and redistributive justice and a growing concern about identity, cultural representations and recogitative justice among the new social movements (NSMs) is what supposedly marks the post-1960s politics of protest.

The post-1960s (or the so-called new social) movements were considered the result of, and the response to, their historical conditions including: the bureaucratization of trade unions and labor movements; the internal immobility of political parties; the neglect of discriminating issues other than class by earlier social movements; an emerging new middle class; increasing levels of intellectual capital; the emerging importance of cultural reproduction instead of material production; and marketization of knowledge (Burgmann 2003). In addition, these conditions had a strong correlation with the post-WWII political economy: the rising welfare state, the Keynesian economic system, the corporatist state, the embourgeoisement of the working class, state protectionism, and higher levels of employment and accountability of social democratic states, higher real income levels, and post-materialist needs and values (Inglehart 2000: 228). Accordingly, all these conditions (generally referred to under titles such as ‘post-industrial society’, ‘welfare capitalism’, or ‘late modernity’) has made social and political activists launch themselves into a new process of social learning.

According to these accounts, the rise of welfare state in the West has caused social cleavages to be no longer derived from the control of the means of production, but rather from the means of survival. Therefore, the emergence of single-issue movements for the reallocation of public resources such as housing and health would be more likely. However, many of these structural speculations, especially those related to the growing role of the state, are now deeply questioned regarding the changing conditions caused by the relative retreat of the welfare state in the West, and the definite decline of protectionist policies in most of the post-colonization South. Since the early 1980s, state interventions, such as protectionist policies for education, health and civil activities, have been under pressure by neoliberalist ambitions, such as ‘austerity measures’ in the North and ‘structural adjustment programs’ in the South (Laurell 2000).

Welfare states in all developed countries have been experiencing enormous financial pressures. Many scholars argue that in responding to such pressures, governments have begun
to adopt the marketization and privatization approaches, which eventually lead to the destruction of social democracy and to the polarization of society. Although the growing resistance and the “strength of support for public social provision in most countries makes the dismantling of the welfare state highly unlikely” (Pierson 1998) the real challenges and pressures to welfare states due to the neoliberalist reforms are undeniable.

As Bartholomew and Mayer (1992) argue, issues of inequality and hierarchy must no longer be discarded in favor of the politics of identity and in a cultural reductionist type of analysis. Fostering the de-politicization of public spheres and neoliberal public policies on the deregulation of labor markets have weakened institutionalized opportunities for tripartite negotiations among the state, capital and labor (the so-called capital-labor compromise), or the social corporatist patterns of interest representations (Navarro 1998). Besides, the protecting measures for disempowered groups and long-term peace and justice perspectives secured by the state in post-industrial societies have become less persuasive.

However, the retreat of the welfare state, since the 1980s, does not necessarily mean the resurrection of cruel types of industrial capitalism that sparked in the 19th Century. Hence, such an event per se does not discredit the cultural and cognitive approaches in favor of a class-based and economic deterministic model. New structural inequalities fit neither into materialist nor into post-materialist models of explanations.

The retreat of a welfare oriented and centralized planning paradigm from the private sphere of life in favor of economic rationality has pushed forward the radical Left to rearticulate what they mean by ‘justice’ and to radicalize their basic ideas of democracy to remove ambiguities which might overlap with the ideas of new liberal democracy. The new situation caused by the emergence of neo-liberal governments and the withdrawal of state interventions for social protection, has required some scholars to extend the European approach beyond the analyses of the welfare state (Maheu 1995; Melucci 1995c; Castells 1997).

The recent extensions of European and late modernity approaches have embraced growing discourses around notions such as network society, information age, communication revolution, and the agential role of movement actors in these new historical situations. Among scholars who have given significant attention to the changing conditions and situation of the current global social movements are Melucci (1995b, 1995a, 2000), Castells (2000, 2004), and to some extent Giddens (1991, 1994). It is argued that the idea of the State as the fundamental element of change has been weakened because of certain factors such as: the growing rates of employment in informal sectors; stronger economic interdependence among states; the diffusion of mass communication across borders; the emergence of public awareness of supranational dimensions of social life; as well as a growth of organisms of supranational sovereignty and various decentralizations (della Porta and Diani 1999: 34). These factors have limited the power of the State in controlling civil society. At the same time, the resulting proliferation of diverse global public spheres and subnational autonomies brings about significant changes in the nature of collective action-ideation.

Besides, the growing influence of the media and the importance of symbolic production have provided new spaces for conflict. For instance, some new spaces for conflict about the different uses of scientific and technological knowledge have opened up by way of the new scientific developments in biotechnology. Growing consumerism and commercialization of cultural products have always been associated with the intervention of the market into private aspects of life, such as eating habits, styles of clothes, leisure, entertainment, and emotional expressions. This intervention has resulted in new forms of political-cultural reactions, perhaps
best crystallized in the rise and demise of new antagonistic lifestyles such as popular music, youth movements and countercultures plus the increasing diversification among social groups (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). All the above-listed factors are mainly referred to in order to explain the growing cultural-ideological diversity and even individualization of current global movements, rather than to explain their growing convergence, interdependence, and new integrative features. Therefore, from this point of view, justice as the recognition of difference remains as the prime demand in the global age. The weakness of national political and welfare institutions in securing distributive and recognitive justice cannot be compensated by fortifying unified global governance, as this would exacerbate local injustices by downplaying local differences.

These sorts of theoretical extensions insist that in the present era of economic austerity, class struggles have remained superseded by powerful new interest groups of welfare-state clients capable of largely resisting pressures from neoliberal states. However, in fact, regarding cases of ‘new welfare movements’ (Fagan and Lee 1997), the demands for challenging interventionist states in the 1960s-1970s have been largely replaced with recent mobilizations heading for extending State responsibilities for providing distributive justice for the disadvantaged groups in the process of economic reform. How could these movements requesting welfare for disadvantaged communities challenge the totality of injustices caused by systemic application of post-welfare policies across societies and localities?

Just recently the rise of anti-corporate and anti-capitalist (anti-globalization) movements has exposed, for many social researchers and theorists, the importance of integration between infrastructural-material and postmaterial-cultural issues in the dissident knowledge produced in the GJM. This has just recently encouraged the revision of both culturalist and structuralist accounts of current global movements. Though the multiplication of identities and interests in the era of globalization has remained high in comparison to the industrialization era, different segments of society have manifested many common grounds of concern about both the so-called infrastructural and super-structural bases of social inequalities and exclusion.

Since the crisis of the welfare-state capitalist system in the 1960s and the reemergence of liberalist capitalism, the social and political-economic conditions have transformed significantly due to the globalization of neo-liberalism, the partial withdrawal of welfare-state protectionism, de-politicizing and de-radicalizing policies, and growing levels of unemployment and inequality. However, these structural transformations have not followed any linear or convergent path towards the entire dominance of any specific epoch. Therefore, the movements for recognitive justice, now after thirty years of structural changes, have been transformed (whether through being politically institutionalized or through losing their relevance) in responding to these changing conditions. Such a transformation can be explained in terms of the complexities of global change.

A general explanatory model that assists in understanding how the recent structural complexities and inequalities have factually translated into new elements of conceptualizing justice is needed. Investigation of the ‘complexities of global change’ allows for questioning of the reductionist frames of reference within which most conventional explanations of solidarity among diverse identities and concerns operate. Global complexities can be defined in terms of following components: (1) the multiscalar nature of social inequality (injuries and injustice at all levels from local to global have become more interdependent); (2) the multi-dimensional nature of global inequalities (both the material and post-material aspects of inequalities are highly intertwined); and (3) the cross-sectionality or multi-polarity of
global inequalities (though social inequalities shaped around race, class, gender, and ethnicity have different dynamics and trajectories, they are practically enmeshed, more so than before). While the first component accounts for changes in the necessary institutional bases of justice, the second and third components influence the content and units of justice, respectively.

The following section will mostly focus on the second component of global complexity which can be considered as determining factors for the rise of accommodative justice especially the integration between recognition and redistributive ideas of justice (for an extensive discussion of other components, see Hosseini 2009). Unlike new integrative justice theorists, this section will show that in fact due to the interminglement and interdependence between the economic and social-cultural aspects of global change, demands for accommodative justice have been appealing for many in the GJM. Giving attention to the ‘complexity’ of global change helps us to go beyond the limits of dualisms, like those of lifeworld-system, global-local, and material-postmaterial that are associated with theoretical controversies around the definition of justice (Hosseini 2006). It is the ‘complexity’ of current global transformations that has provided a structural backdrop for both the movements for recognition justice (i.e. the so-called NSMs) and the movements for redistributive justice (i.e. the so-called OSMs like the labor movement) to reconstruct their original concerns and ideas about social changes in a more accommodative manner.

**Complexity of Global Inequality and the Questions of Recognition vs. Redistribution, Identity vs. Ideology, Social vs. Economic, Material vs. Postmaterial**

The dualisms of socio-cultural vs. political-economic and recognition vs. redistribution, in association with the dualism of the ‘lifeworld’ vs. ‘system’, can be challenged with respect to the globalization processes through which social inequalities are reproduced. Articulation between culture and economy has become much more intense and complex than before (Gregson, Simonsen, and Vaiou, 2001). As Lash and Urry (1994: 64) argue, economies are increasingly “interarticulated” with culture, in view of the fact that culture has become a tool in economic development, and knowledge and information have gained more importance within current economies. For instance, examining the movement of a Mexican traditional food artifact (tortilla) between the local and global contexts, Lind and Barham (2004) show how powerful, homogenizing forces of the capitalist market have commodified an authentic cultural food. However, as they conclude, the commodification processes illustrate “the interconnectedness between material and symbolic exchanges” and represent a “continuous convergence of economic, social, cultural, political, and moral concerns” (2004: 47). Goods and markets have become more entwined with cultural signs and issues thereby influencing the processes of identity formation (Salcedo 2003: 1099).

Along with such a growing interarticulation and co-evolution between culture and economy, associated recognition and redistributive aspects mediated by the role of the welfare state have changed. In the 19th Century, many recognition claims were bound with the material concerns of women, anti-slavery and nationalist movements. This situation finally ended up with the development of the post-WWII welfare state due to the pressures from labour to ensure a less unequal redistribution of opportunities, resources, and income between classes.

The corporatist compromise between government, business, and labour (known as tri-partism) softened class differences and created a new opportunity for acknowledging the recognition aspects of social justice issues; in fact, the state was under more pressure to re-
cognize the rights and entitlements of many other excluded groups (such as indigenous and homosexual groups). The result was a growing political potential, mediated by the redistributive welfare state, for the inclusion of the Other into a civic covenant (O’Neill 2001). At the same time, the model was also commonly adopted by anti- and post-colonization nationalist states in the South.

However, the post-Cold War globalization of the neoliberal state has been associated with the rejection of any serious possibility of political treatment to the market that might redistribute income and resources between and within groups including classes. In evading these institutionalized social recognitions in their post-Cold War austerity policies, neoliberalist regimes have shown feeble tendency to accept responsibilities for mediating between the rights different groups may claim for themselves and the requirements of their rationalized economic systems. Consequently, through the global expansion of neoliberalist economic regimes, tensions between different recognition claims based on different conceptions of Self are expected to rise.

In the post War welfare state era, with its higher level of centralized planning, recognition claims did target the national government as the primary responsible body for social exclusions. However, in a less centralized planning system, the clash between recognition claims can surpass the nation state and mutate into a war between chauvinist claims, as happened with ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe due to the sudden fall of communist governments. This promotes a situation where the “wars of recognition are here to stay,” as Bauman (2001: 148) claims, or “a return to the ‘state of nature’” where we shall lose our “will-to-civic covenant” (O’Neill 2001: 78-9).

As Featherstone (2001: 496) argues, the capitalist economic system is not merely globalizing under its own dynamics, such as “the activities of powerful alliances of businessmen, industrialists, politicians, academics, and cultural intermediaries”. Rather, underneath the global economic integration there are developing “patterns of sociality, cultural expectations, and means of orientation which recursively form and are formed by the enlarged networks of interdependence” (2001: 496). Like in the 18th century, today we can speak of a global market culture or a commonsense authenticity that gives people an affirmative image of social relationships based on the market. The most evident exemplar of such cultural (re)formation of the capitalist economy can be found in today’s logos, i.e. the current wave of the branded corporate economy. As Klein (2000: 23) clearly articulates, “With this wave of brand mania has come a new breed of businessman, one who will proudly inform you that Brand X is not a product but a way of life, an attitude, a set of values, a look, an idea”.

Alongside such transformations in the mechanisms of forming people’s identities as consumers, the mechanisms of identity formation through relations of production have also partially, but meaningfully, changed. In explaining the current identity changes in terms of the changes in the capitalist modes of employment, some theorists of ‘post-industrial’ society have grounded their arguments on the crisis of Fordism, which has led to the globalizing post-Fordist resolution through adopting the neo-liberal stance (see Turner 1986: 104-7; Piore and Sabel 1984; Lash and Urry 1987). The shift is often described in terms of a series of interrelated social, economic, technological, political, and spatial transformations. These changes can be generally summed up as a shift from “the concentration and centralization” of mass production based enterprises “within the framework of the nation-state,” regulated by the state, to “the deconcentration and geographic dispersal” of small-scale, networked enterprises all over the world (Lem 2002: 287). Such a structural change in the organization
of production is seen to be associated with a growth in human mobility, the creation of new forms of social polarizations and disparity, employment relationships and thereby the proliferation of new forms of identity (Walks 2001; Schiller, Basch, and Szanton 1992).

The current changes under the title of post-Fordism, while linking the new questions of identity and lifestyle to quality of life, economic security and material concerns, revitalize the traditional class and labor problems into new formats (see Tomlinson 1999, for his quantitative analysis of such links). Although the negative economic and environmental impacts of neoliberal policies, such as globalizing ecological hazards and job instabilities, have transcended class divisions and national boundaries, they have not reduced the importance of class, race, and gender in political motivations. The reason, as Marshall (1999: 269) points out, is simply that people “of low socioeconomic status are systematically and disproportionately exposed to the hazardous byproducts of modernization while receiving only a fraction of the benefits”. In terms of evolving gender and ethnic relations, the increase of immigrant women’s participation in the growing contingent types of working has resulted in new configurations but still linked with the older forms of divisions (Walby 2000).

As women and migrants with diverse ethnic backgrounds have increasingly been involved with post-Fordist contingent modes of employment – whether in developed countries or developing societies – they have become increasingly aware of economic redistribution issues, which may have direct links to the identities on which they are discriminated against (Acker 1989; ILO 1999). This has constructive implications for integrative justice theories. Accordingly, as Walby (2001: 120) in criticizing Fraser argues, “the relationships between the role of recognition and redistribution politics is not that of alternates, in which recognition is replacing redistribution”. The evidence Walby draws on is the changes in deep structures of gender relations in the US and the UK due to the greater involvement of women in labor markets and therefore in union activities (2001: 118). In sum, both the material and postmaterial bases of identity and, their associated politics of redistribution and recognition, have co-evolved into a new phase of capitalist globalization.

Besides, the co-evolution or co-development of social relations has not been consistently occurring but rather dissonantly bifurcating alongside the axes of discrimination, inequality, and exclusion. For instance, both the benefits and risks of post-Fordism have spread unequally among different social groups and statuses. The decentralization of corporate jobs has been associated with a greater use of contingent and part-time workers, who have low job security (Gardner 1995; Fallick 1996), as well as higher rates of job displacements among lower educated workers (Morris and Western 1999). The percentage of part-time, subcontracted, and self-employed jobs has increased, while the proportion of women and migrants in this increase has also been amplified (see Tilly 1996, for the case of the US; and OECD 2004, for the OECD members since 1993).

Due to the migration of labor intensive jobs to the global South, work in these regions has become “increasingly fragmented, deskilled and feminized in the race by multinational capital to increase its profits” (Freeman 1998: 246). At the same time, in the North, the core of those who face job losses are people of color and women. Moss and Tilly (1996) investigate how the Black men’s growing disadvantage in the US labor market can be explained in terms of the changes in skill requirements, particularly the increase in demands for ‘soft skills’. The global expansion of a knowledge-based economy privileges those with high levels of education mainly developed in Western countries. In association with new
transnational flexible relations of production, workers can develop a new collective identity that is more accommodative, both in terms of their identity and class statues.

Local impacts of global warming and climate change, which seem to affect all people equally (regardless of their class and identity), have been unequally dispersed among and within different societies. While the involvement of poor societies in causing this problem is much less than that of developed societies: “Poor resource bases, inequalities in income, weak institutions, and limited technology limit the capacity of the most vulnerable to deal with the impact of climate change, and means that they will suffer most from its effects” (People and Planet Network 2004). Even inside a highly developed country, as Newman (2000: 530) mentions, “environmental degradation disproportionately affects minority communities”. Even the minority and disadvantaged communities have been underrepresented in the mainstream environmentalist movements for the most part of their history. Nonetheless, the more such dissonance in the globalization of environmental risks has been recognized due to the growth of resistance among poor communities, the more cognitive shifts towards adopting more accommodative discourses have occurred; for instance, reframing environmental degradation within social justice discourses rather than an utterly ecological one (Bullard and Wright 1992; Bullard 1993).

Therefore, the growing accommodative cooperation between working class activists (like unions), the newly raised participation of young ‘contingent workers’, and the environmentally disadvantaged communities in the field, has not happened fortuitously. Rather, they have resulted from contemporary changes in which the organization of production, the distribution of risks, and culturally homogenizing forces have been amalgamated disproportionately more than ever to stabilize power relations. There has also been a transformation of social movements into more accommodative discourses with respect to cultural identities and material interests. Langmore (2001: 11) contends that “economic and social issues are closely interdependent and that the appropriate stance is to work on both together”. Zinn (2003), a post-anarchist and the author of *A People’s History of the United States*, described the anti-WTO protest in Seattle 1999 as a turning point in the history of movements since it was a departure from single-issue movements (cited in Brecher, Costello, and Smith, 2000: 16).

Recognition claims for many underprivileged groups in such a complex integration between culture and the economy have not been ‘merely’ oriented to the affirmation of their particularities against the system (as some like Fraser suggest), or even in contrast to each other in a clash of identities. Hence, the growing global complexities have caused the global field of resistance to become bifurcated between those who still follow the reductionist traditions and those who adopt a more accommodative point of view. For instance, in spite of the growth of inequalities between and within countries since the 1980s due to the adoption of neoliberal policies (Parayil 2005; Held and Kaya 2007), the right-shift in centre-left parties towards economic liberalism was associated with the decline of unionization and working-class representation in the public sector. Therefore, the working class identity politics, which achieved a satisfactory level of institutionalization during the post-WWII welfare states, has faced a trend of de-institutionalization. This decline happened in a period during which social inequalities have become greater, more complex and more multifaceted due to accelerated economic globalization (see Burgmann 2003: 251-3). The failure of left-wing parties in representing the concerns and interests of the working class has encouraged not only the resumption of traditional international protectionism but also new internationalist anti-capitalism within the current field of resistance.
Oscillating between traditional protectionism and internationalist anti-capitalist orientations, unions have played an ambivalent but important role in the movement (see Burgmann 2003: 205). However, what may cause the resumption of ‘class’ is the rise in awareness regarding interwoven webs of exploitation inside and between globalizing societies, rather than the physical juxtaposition of unionism and other different groups. Global justice ideologues have revealed their concerns about the ambivalent contribution of unionism inside the movement (see for instance, Waterman 2003). Hence, there has been a bifurcation between the old, institutionalized labor movements and “the possibility of a new social movement labor internationalism” (Waterman 2005: 152), where “a practical, non-ideological, emphatically non-partisan” labor can be an equal partner with other actors in confronting the neoliberal order (Blackwell 1998: 321).

In addressing the increasing number of part-time workers, unemployed, and low-waged labor in Japan, due to the transformation of the mode of production from Fordism to post-Fordism, Yoshitaka (2005) identifies the growth of a young cultural resistance with a strong political potential in challenging neoliberalism in the country. In contrast to the so-called NSMs, which were theorized as more cultural than political, the current generation of Japanese activists has been more able to intervene in everyday practices, practically linking the public and the private, blurring the distinction between the cultural and the political, and avoiding Leftist rhetoric and elitism. The cognitive-ideological autonomy of this young trend of resistance is rooted in the transforming nature of social inequality and the relative political-economic autonomy of the social status, from which the participants originated.

In conclusion, the ever increasingly interweaving of cultural and economic aspects of life in an unequal and disproportionate manner has required the politics of resistance to expand the meaning of social justice to bridge material and post-material rights. “The politics of identity and culture needed to be related to, rather than opposed to, the politics of class,” Mayo (2005: 76) argues. As Bauman (2001: 147) concludes, “melting together the task of distributive justice and the policy of recognition is the meaning of social justice in the present … era, while campaign politics compounding the two is its prime, and perhaps its sole, available strategy”.

**Experiencing the Structural Complexities of Global Change**

The influence of the structural complexities of globalization on the ideational structure of GJM and the emergence of accommodative justice are mediated by experiential and constructive mechanisms. Acknowledging this reality would help us avoid any structural determinism. In their case study of union revitalization in the late 1990s California, Voss and Sherman (2000) show that structural factors, however important, cannot explain, by themselves, the differences between union organizations in breaking out of their predominant bureaucratic conservatism. The role of leadership in convincing staff of the value of working in different ways is important. Besides, as they show, union “activists with experience outside the labor movement brought broader visions, knowledge of alternative organizational models, and practice in disruptive tactics …” (2000: 333)

Two major experiential mechanisms mediate the structural changes and influence the cognitive formation of the movement. The first one is the recognition of the multidimensionality and systemic reciprocity of social inequalities as well as the necessity of expanding the scope of resistance to deal with these complexities. As Starr and Adams (2003: 28) ac-
knowledge, the first world environmentalist community-based resistance, had begun to recognize that in order to achieve goals at the local-community level, it was necessary to deal with the broader issue of international equality and to focus on taking responsibility for having underdeveloped the third world. For instance, Randy Hay, an environmentalist, at the Tropical Rainforest conference, 18 October 1987, claimed that, “to be more effective at saving tropical Rain Forests … what we need is to get our foot off the throat of the Rain Forests” (cited in Starr and Adams 2003: 28). This process requires not only building sustainable networks of knowledge-experience exchange among like-minded organizations and agents concerned with common particular issues, but also providing forums and conferences with diverse forces of resistance such as workers, environmentalists, farmers, and women.

The second experiential mechanism, which is the most important factor in transforming identities beyond the borders of conventional social differences, is related to the movement actors’ experience of changes in their own social background due to the current changes in the broader structural bases of social problems. The more participants with different social backgrounds experience common predicaments, the more likely the cross-boundary nature of social problems will be translated into identity (re)formation and the accommodative notion of justice. The following exemplary case help clarify the above-mentioned experiential mechanism.

The Case of ACT UP and its Experience of Multilateral Oppression

ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), a grassroots organization of diverse individuals and groups, was formed in March 1987 at the Lesbian and Gay Community Centre in New York. They started with regular meetings and after three weeks, held their first demonstration, a direct action tactic on Wall Street, to protest profiteering by pharmaceutical companies and the Reagan administration’s lax reaction to the AIDS crisis.¹ They shut down the New York Stock Exchange and picketed St. Patrick’s Cathedral.

The case of ACT UP is a good example of how a grassroots organization evolves from a single-issue movement, concerned about the issue of AIDS and health and directed by white middle-class homosexuals, to a transnational network with overlapping concerns about both recognition and redistributive justice. This evolution simply shows the emergence of an accommodative mode of dissident knowledge and solidarity out of agential experience of structural changes at both national and international levels. Due to the recent socio-demographic changes in the patterns of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), including the AIDS epidemic, and the changing structures of inequality in terms of education and public health infrastructure, the composition of movement participants has changed.

During the last three decades, the demographical pattern of HIV infection in the United States has been changing in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender (Wasserheit 1995). At first, it was dominant among white homosexual and bisexual men. In the early 1990s, the spread among this population started to plateau while the number of heterosexually transmitted cases in women, especially women of color, rapidly increased (Wasserheit 1995). Social inequalities, exacerbated by recent economic globalization processes, lay at the heart of such an epidemiological transition (Coburn 2004).

At a global level, although the HIV virus has not shown any respect for humanity’s national borders, we have been witnessing a growing gap between the South and the North in terms of the progression and understanding of the natural history of the virus, and therefore the capacity to develop its treatment. As Parker (2002) shows, the global distribution of AIDS has been highly unequal between the poor and the rich. Inside both developed and developing societies, “a range of structural inequalities intersect and combine to shape the character of HIV/AIDS epidemic” (Parker 2002: 344). Economic globalization has been associated with attempts to generalize Western research and health care models: “The latter scenario is one of the recommendations of the World Bank” (Zimmet 2001: 304). The history of AIDS started with an “utter nonchalance” about the victims by the leading national and international institutions, political and religious leaders, then with “dread for those infected,” and finally followed by a grave inequality in terms of treatment and prevention due to the rationalization of the economy (Garrett 1994: 10).

The strong correlation between the changing patterns of disease and the changing socio-economic structures of inequality on both national and international scales, accounts for recent developments in the composition and consciousness of participants in the ACT UP and similar networks. Such developments are well self-documented by the ACT UP activists like Kim (2001) of Queers for Economic Justice, Stockdill (2003), an activist-scholar and a member of ACT UP, and in the book From ACT UP to the WTO edited by Shepard and Hayduk (2002).

As Kim (2001) reveals, the early structure of ACT UP was largely dominated by white middle class homosexuals. During the 1990s, while expanding to as many as 70 chapters all around the world, the organization experienced decline and split. Due to the introduction of antiretroviral drugs in the mid-1990s, which were unequally accessible to patients from different social statuses, the AIDS activism among middle class homosexual communities declined. However, changes in the national and global distribution of AIDS influenced both the structure and praxis of ACT UP. A shift in priorities occurred from a particular self-interested group to an inclusive network of different initiatives, once the number of participants from low-income communities and the people of color increased; “ACT UP has come to focus on the global AIDS epidemic, applying constant pressure on the US government and pharmaceutical companies to facilitate generic drug manufacturing, and on international policy-makers to enact immediate debt relief for developing nations” (Kim 2001).

Analysing empirical evidence out of his ethnographical case studies of AIDS activists in the US, Stockdill (2003) shows how multifaceted systems of oppression have shaped current AIDS solidarities. As he explains, the multiple inequalities constructed in society can easily translate into the movement resulting in movement contentions and biases; the “price of activism weighs more heavily on economically, politically, and socially marginalized groups” (2003: 128). For instance, middle class white men were slow in becoming concerned about people of color, and homosexuals of color have always been alienated from the hubs of solidarity networks. However, according to him, despite such dissonant influences of multiple oppressions on solidarities, interlocking inequalities at different levels (personal, institutional and cultural) necessitate developing an inclusive (accommodative) dissident knowledge to create positive cross-movement alliances; “inclusion is key in all areas of progressive and radical organizing” (2003: 167). In November 1999, the organization participated in the anti-
WTO protest in Seattle and committed itself to building a coalition within the global resistance against global systems of capitalism (see Shepard and Hayduk 2002: 1-9).

**Conclusion**

Justice has been conceptualized by many in the GJM as a multi-dimensional, multi-scalar and multi-polar issue. As argued in this article, studying the conception of justice among the global justice movement actors and their conceptualizations of injustice on their own ground can have significant lessons for both normative theories of justice and analytical explanations of global inequalities and global movements. At least,

1. Given the movement’s demands for justice, theories of justice can be proved reductionist and not adequately tied to the complexities of social inequalities in the global age.
2. On the other hand, when trying to explain the structural roots of global justice movement and its practical conceptions of justice, the available social movement and globalization theories can be shown inadequate, as they have failed to address the complexities of social change.

New theories which has rightfully insisted on the necessity of developing more inclusive notions of justice, need to take a closer look at the justice demanded by those in the GJM and must consider the complexities of global change.

The growing multiplications of social roles, and increasing fragmentation lines due to the complexity of globalization processes and their bifurcating impacts, keep affecting social compositions among agents of resistance and emancipation. However, this fact does not suggest that today’s history is without a positive Subject, and does not mean that effectual, sustainable solidarities for the realization of (a) just world(s) are impracticable. Complexity in any social system is not only associated with the growth of fragmentations and tensions, but also with the growth of interdependence, interconnection, and the promoted exchanges of ideas and information. As show in the case of ACT UP, in such a situation, those actors who have been experiencing interdependent and interwoven systems of exploitation and exclusion, aggravated by multi-scalar and asymmetrical processes of globalization, are more apt to develop accommodative notions of justice.

**References**


Stockdill, B. C. (2003) *Activism against AIDS: At the Intersection of Sexuality, Race, Gender, and Class*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.


**About the Author**

**Dr. S. A. Hamed Hosseini**

S. A. Hamed Hosseini is assistant professor of sociology and associated faculty researcher at The Institute for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing (TAISIW), the University of Newcastle, Australia. He completed his PhD in Sociology and Global Studies (2006) at the Australian National University (ANU). He has conducted research on transnational social movements, global social change, globalist ideologies, Islamism, and transnational identities. Previously, he taught at the Australian National University, University of Technology Sydney, and University of New South Wales in the areas of third world development, social change, contemporary society, globalization, research methods, environmental sociology, and religion and politics. He has published articles and presented conference papers on Global Justice
EDITORS
Jan Nederveen Pieterse, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA.
Bill Cope, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
Jin-Ho Jang, Institute for Social Development and Policy Research,
Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea
Habibul Haque Khondker, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
Iain Donald MacPherson, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada,
Bhikhu Parekh, University of Hull, UK; Member, House of Lords, UK.
Thomas Pogge, Columbia University, New York, New York, USA.
Timothy Shaw, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.
Manfred B. Steger, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
Gustavo Lins Ribeiro, Instituto de Ciências Sociais,
Universidade de Brasília, Brasília
Fazal Rizvi, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA

Please visit the Journal website at http://www.GlobalStudiesJournal.com
for further information about the Journal or to subscribe.
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS JOURNALS

ARTS IN SOCIETY
- Creates a space for dialogue on innovative theories and practices in the arts, and their inter-relationships with society.
- ISSN: 1833-1866

BOOK
- Explores the past, present and future of books, publishing, libraries, information, literacy and learning in the information society.
- ISSN: 1447-9567

DESIGN PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES
- Examines the meaning and purpose of ‘design’ while also speaking in grounded ways about the task of design and the use of designed artefacts and processes.
- ISSN: 1833-1874

THE GLOBAL STUDIES JOURNAL
- Maps and interprets new trends and patterns in globalisation.
- ISSN 1835-4432

HUMANITIES
- Discusses the role of the humanities in contemplating the future and the human, in an era otherwise dominated by scientific, technical and economic rationalisms.
- ISSN: 1447-9559

LEARNING
- Sets out to foster inquiry, invite dialogue and build a body of knowledge on the nature and future of learning.
- ISSN: 1447-9540

MANAGEMENT
- Creates a space for discussion of the nature and future of organisations, in all their forms and manifestations.
- ISSN: 1447-9575

INCLUSIVE MUSEUM
- Addresses the key question: How can the institution of the museum become more inclusive?
- ISSN 1835-2014

GLOBAL STUDIES
- Draws from the various fields and perspectives through which we can address fundamental questions of sustainability.
- ISSN: 1832-2077

TECHNOLOGY
- Explores the meaning and purpose of the academy in times of striking social transformation.
- ISSN 1835-2030

FOR SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT subscriptions@commonground.com.au