

Globalisering og arbeiderbevegelsen

Kristian Stokke

kristian.stokke@sgeo.uio.no

Globalization and labour

- Hyperglobalism

- There is no alternative
- End of labour
- Global capital/local labour:
Race to the bottom

- Skepticism

- Globalization is a myth
- Workforce expansion
- National capital/
regulation/labor: Business
as usual

- Alternative position

- Globalization transforms production and poses challenges for organized labor
- Organized labor makes strategic decisions regarding interests and arenas for mobilization/politicization

The second great transformation

■ Fordism

- Mass production of homogenous goods
- Vertical integration of firms
- Job specialization, division of labour
- State regulation, welfare state, collective bargaining
- Mass consumption of mass durables
- National economy, politics, culture

■ Flexible accumulation

- Flexible production, variety of products (just in time)
- Quasi-vertical integration: subcontracting
- Worker flexibility and informalization
- Deregulation and privatization
- Individualized consumption of specialized products
- Globalized economy, politics and culture

Flexibilization

- Labour flexibility as a social process and a discourse.
- Social process:
 - External numerical flexibility - number of employees adjusted in accordance with employers' needs
 - Externalisation - part of the firm's work is put out through sub-contracting
 - Internal numerical flexibility - working hours and their 'delivery' adjusted according to employers' needs
 - Functional flexibility - workers' jobs modified according to employers' needs
 - Wages flexibility - labour's reward according to productivity and market conditions
- Discourse:
 - Flexibility as freedom or flexibility as attack on labour rights

Informalization (South)

- Work outside the formal wage-labour market, e.g. self-employment
- Social process:
 - Informal sector: exclusion from formal sector and labour absorption in informal sector
 - Informalization: informal and formal sectors are intimately linked: flexibilization in the South spells informalization
- Discourse:
 - The informal sector will shrink with development (leftover from underdevelopment) vs. the informal sector being created by capitalist development

Femininization

- Growth in female employment worldwide
- Social process
 - Growth of women workers in the "new international division of labour" (1970s and 80s) and in casual work (homework) (1990s-)
 - Work in the informal sector means greater insecurity, reduced work hours and pay, loss of insurance, holidays, maternity leave, sick pay, pension etc.
- Discourse
 - Workforce participation an important achievement vs. pre-existing gender division of labour being utilised to achieve labour flexibility

Internationalism

- Old and new internationalism
 - Workers of the World Unite (The Communist Manifesto, 1848)
 - You can't be a trade unionist unless you are an internationalist, the reason being that substandard conditions anywhere are a threat to good conditions anywhere (Lane Kirkland AFL-CIO, 1994)
- Social clause
 - ILO core conventions to be ratified in trade agreements, to apply to all who work, including in the informal sector and in the FTZs
 - Freedom of associations; Right to organise and engage in collective bargaining; Abolition of forced labour; Abolition of child labour; Against discrimination in employment

Social movement unionism

- Workplace and community
 - The emerging social-movement unionism is an active, community-oriented strategy which works with a broad conception of who the working people are. It breaks down the binary oppositions between workplace and community, economic and political struggles, and between formal-sector workers and the working poor.
- Issues
 - Labour standards: Struggles against child labor and flexibilization/informalization globally
 - Livelihoods: Struggle over both production and reproduction issues (e.g. anti-privatization, South Africa)

Globalization and labour

- Challenges, but also opportunities
 - Workplace changes and discourses of flexibility and competitiveness
 - Democratic political spaces and human rights discourses
- Strategies
 - Going global: New internationalism
 - Going social: Social movement unionism