

Market/State Governance in an era of fading Globalisation: ‘where are the women?’

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While the major strands of global governance theory bring a great deal of sophisticated analysis to bear upon the changing nature of market/state governance, all are predominantly ‘gender blind’ or at best address the issue of gender in the context of the impact of the various political economic shifts on the lives of women. And further, despite opening up the arena of non-state actors to governance scrutiny, they continue to focus on the governance of polities rather than of communities, which means that the relational link between the private and the public, the civic and the intimate, at the heart of feminist analysis remains unrecognized. The paper will address this gap by examining market distortions that emerge through this neglect as well as by examining how the state is an active player in restructuring not only the national gendered labour-capital relations in response to new pressures of globalisation, but also reorganising its own regulatory and political boundaries to protect its position within the globalised political economy.

Struggles over meanings attached to the term governance have characterized debate in both the North and South. While in the North critical scholarship has challenged the ways in which the concept of governance has become a triumphant shorthand for neoliberal shifts in market-state relations, in the South critical focus has been on challenging governance as institutional medicine for state failure (Nussbaum et al. 2003). With shifts in the regulation of capitalist relations and formulations of social policy, varied new feminist thinking has been articulated on governance.¹ However, the focus has remained on the changing relationship between states, markets, and civil society and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). While the earliest interventions considered gendered mobilizations outside the state and international institutions (Meyer and Prügl 1999), there also emerged a strong

body of literature on gender mainstreaming that sought to unpack the processes through which social policy is framed and transformed within institutions.ⁱⁱ However, governance as gender mainstreaming has evoked feminist anxieties too. In response to the focus on civil society and NGOs as governance actors, and in a stringent critique of the liberal strand and the cultural turn of second-wave feminism, Nancy Fraser has worried that the “movement’s relative success in transforming culture stands in sharp contrast with its relative failure to transform institutions” (Fraser 2009, 1). Fraser also expresses concern that in some ways feminist successes in the cultural realm are built on the convergence of second-wave feminism’s critiques of state-centric capitalism with neoliberal attacks on the state regulation of markets. Finally, in the context of law and social policy, Janet Halley and her coauthors (Halley et al. 2006) argue that feminist achievements within institutions have become sufficiently successful to warrant the term “governance feminism,” a form of feminism that actively seeks power within mainstream organizations and often uses the architecture of new governance arrangements such as NGOs to criminalize particular forms of gendered behavior. Aside from raising concerns about which feminisms are made visible within institutions of international governance, and in what terms, this particular attack on feminist institutional politics makes us worry about the seeming rejection of the multiplicity of strategies that feminists have pursued in challenging dominant social relations on the one hand and the reification of anti-institutional projects on the other.

However, despite considerable work by feminist political economists on states and markets and contemporary IPE, gendered questions at the heart of the international political economy continue to be neglected. For example, inadequate weight is being given to what we already know: that African American women and Latinas in the United States were dramatically overrepresented as recipients of subprime mortgages (National Council of Negro Women 2009; see also LeBaron and Roberts, “Toward a Feminist Political Economy of Capitalism and Carcerality,” in this issue); that the repossession crisis will have a disproportionate impact on women dealing with relationship breakdown (Nettledon et al. 1999); that shifts in consumption

patterns are likely being funded by women working harder inside and outside the home (Moser 1993); that dislocations in production have gendered effects on unemployment.ⁱⁱⁱ As a substitute for rigorous analysis of gendered political economy, we observe reductionist biological explanations. Multiple commentators have wondered whether more women in banking would have averted the meltdown (see, e.g., Beck, Behr, and Gütter 2009), or whether testosterone explains risk-taking.^{iv} Can we read this, generously, as an emerging common sense that the dominant formulation of capitalism resulting in the crisis was deeply structured by gender inequality (among other relations of inequality)? Ethnographic accounts of the trading floor have long detailed its gendered and racialized nature (McDowell and Court 1994; Knorr-Cetina and Preda 2004), and there is awareness in some criticisms of “casino capitalism” that the players are, overwhelmingly, white men. Scholars have also unpacked the ideal of globalized masculinity. Lourdes Benería suggests that recent crises in global capitalism, such as the 1997 East Asian financial crisis, may have brought “Davos Man” (the neoliberal competitive individual) to a turning point, with his selfish excesses increasingly contested (1999, 77). She was prescient in that prediction, and after Enron Man, Lehman Brothers, AIG Man, and Bush/Cheney, her point about the need for critical interrogation of hegemonic racialized capitalist masculinities could not be more pertinent. In the special issue of *Signs* we asked, “...what critical analysts can learn from feminist perspectives and what feminists responding to the current crisis in North America and Europe can learn from others who have been there and done that – in East Asia, Eastern Europe for example - who have seen systems of governance and spectacles of power collapse and who have forged intersectional analyses of political economy”.

Taking these historical links and power relations on board provides us with an alternative perspective from which to view the current crisis, whereby we are encouraged to approach systems of production, exchange, consumption, and social reproduction together in a distinctive light. Historically, mainstream international political economy (IPE) has focused on states, markets, and the relations between the two. Further, it has largely assumed the ontological premises of rational-choice individualism. Critical IPE has challenged this

mapping of social relations by suggesting that both the state and the market are socially embedded institutions and that this embeddedness reflects the tensions of capitalist relations. Both strands, however, share some assumptions: seeing states and markets as actors, folding individuals into systemic equations such that they become invisible, and disregarding some structural social relations, such as gender, while reifying others, such as competition (Peterson 2005; Waylen 2006). In short, neither mainstream nor critical IPE is able to answer the question that Enloe has posed. This task can only be achieved if scholars address both the structural and agential elements of social relations in ways that include an interlinked analysis of the capitalist processes of production, social reproduction, and exchange as well as resistance to and within the system.

In terms of global governance, in this paper I want to map for you the feminist perspectives on global governance which build on these insights. The first thing to be said in this context is that while all feminist perspectives share a gender concern and therefore seek to understand how global governance is gendered there are significant differences between the various strands of feminist analysis.

So, all feminist strands of analysis and critique notice that while there is a growing literature on global governance, both mainstream and some which we might call critical there is little attention paid to the way in which both the processes and the institutions of governance are gendered and result in an institutional, discursive and structural bias in favour of men that leads global governance to take particular forms, which affect different sections of society unequally. It is then not surprising that feminist scholars have begun to challenge this literature and demonstrate the importance of gendered analyses of global governance, even if the body of scholarship produced to date is small in comparison to the gendered analyses of globalization (Bell 2001).

A second aspect of feminist analysis that cuts across different political positions is that unlike the global governance literature, it not only critiques but

seeks to transform gendered governance through this critique. So, for example, one initial focus was on the ways in which women's activism has engaged institutions of governance and attempted to shift their policy parameters as well as opened them to women's membership. The role that women's movements have played in this process, especially through lobbying the UN, international institutions and conferences has also been highlighted (Stienstra, 2000, Friedman 2003, O'Brien et al 2000). One early contribution in this area that took this approach was the collection edited by Meyer and Prugl (1999) *Gender Politics in Global Governance*.

Building on this early work, in a book I have just recently co-edited on *Global Governance: Feminist Perspectives* (2008) and in the special issue of *Signs, Feminists Theorize International Political Economy* (2010), some shared ideas have emerged among feminist scholars working in this area:

- i) The political shift from government to governance reflects a need for regulating a gendered global capitalist economy. Here, capitalism is not simply an economic framework, but a set of gendered social relations, which is reflected in and structures the way we produce and exchange goods and services as well ideas and ideologies. The effects of globalization are uneven and fragmentary and set up profound contradictions and counter movements which create possibilities for resistance.
- ii) In line with the above, that governance can be seen as a gendered system of rules and regulatory norms and mechanisms that translate these through the discourses of law as well as policy and thus secures the realignment of the current economic regimes within the neo-liberal framework.
- iii) And finally, that rules and norms of global governance are shaped not only by dominant global economic actors, but also through the mediations of the state between global and national/local capital as well as by struggles, both discursive and material, against the unfolding consequences of capitalist globalization.

Thus underlying this body of work is a shared belief in

- the need to historicize the contemporary situation as the state has been reconfigured under globalization/neoliberalism.
- Also fundamental is a recognition of the importance of gendered links between different international regimes/organizations/institutions e.g. of trade, finance and production; state and non-state actors, the interplay between them and ways in which these are related to the state, materially and discursively.

Gender concerns are therefore ‘up front’ rather than having feminist perspectives as an addendum to an un-gendered conceptualization of particular issues or frameworks. This feminist scholarship then, addresses the complexity and specificity of processes involved and highlights the links, for example between structural/systemic factors and contingency/agency, at the global, regional and the local levels by examining governance in the context of markets and states and non-state actors, as well as ideologies and what I have called ‘governance of and through spectacles’.

Having said this, it is also important to point out that there are considerable differences among feminist perspectives on governance – liberal institutionalist, Foucaultian, normative, postcolonial and Marxist. Instead of going over these differences, however, what I will do today is to show you how key elements of mainstream governance literature have been critiqued by feminist work and what this contributes to complicating our reading of global governance. I have, in my chapter in *Global Governance* examined four sites of critical governance theorization – three of which have been important in the literature in explaining the discursive shift from government to governance, the state to global governance – Markets, Institutions and Ideology and a fourth that I want to put before you, that of ‘spectacle’.

Today, as time is limited, I will focus on two aspects of this complex debate: First, on the relationship between governance of polities and governance of communities which, I will argue needs to be more carefully thought out within feminist debates on governance than it currently is such that we can see how

a feminist perspective can be not only critical but also transformative in terms of macroeconomic frameworks of governance. I do this in two ways –

1. showing how by building on feminist debates on epistemology we can open up to critique the increasingly successful attempts to privatize knowledge through governance mechanisms and institutions;
2. by suggesting that we need to review the feminist readings of local political spaces to reveal the imbrication of governance of communities and polities, which shores up gendered hierarchies in neoliberal times. Second, I will focus on the idea that I have developed through my reading of cultural political economy – that of governance as/of spectacle, which can also be described as forming a performative approach to political economy.

Markets - While the critical IPE literature worries that the primacy of markets has the effect of leaching market norms into political institutions until they become institutional norms and focuses on the unevenness of the market arena in the context of capitalist social relations, feminist economists have argued that markets are themselves socially embedded institutions and roles ‘within market systems are structured by non-market criteria’ (Harriss-White, 1998:201). The neglect of these non-market, though clearly not non-economic, criteria lead to specific gender based distortions in the markets (see van Staveren, 2002; Elson, 1995, Palmer, 1992). They point out that in the market system, participants come to specific markets with unequal capabilities and bargaining capacities and resources as a result of and which inhere in unequal market structures, regulated and stabilised by gendered state formations, and characterised by more or less unequal power - class and gender are two among many other bases for unequal power relations operating in the market.

Together with critical IPE scholars, feminist scholars and activists have also noted with alarm that institutionalising market neoliberalism provides a set of enforceable rules known in advance, with mechanisms ensuring application of the rules thus marketising public institutions where we notice a rapidly growing tendency towards adopting market principles of organization in the performance of their public roles.

The political outcome of taking this critique seriously can be outlined

through the examination of the discourse on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Feminist arguments about the gendered nature of markets would make us re-examine the whole basis of the TRIPS regime, and not just the governance of the trade regimes in the context of the unequal power relations between North and South. TRIPS patents cover both product and processes. As a result, for example, farmers will not be able to keep seeds from their crops. As women form an increasing number of small and poor farmers, this provision affects them particularly. Second, patents privilege particular forms of knowledge – ‘stabilizing’ historically developed processes of production, entitling modern industrial companies to patent products and processes and denying nature’s and people’s creativity. By discounting time and the historically evolving nature of innovation, patenting institutionalises privilege – those who are left out of the loop (very often poor women are the majority of those excluded) fall progressively behind in the race for ring-fencing products for monopoly exploitation.

(Barwa and Rai 2002: 43)

Feminist scholars, pointing to the ‘bio-piracy’ that TRIPS have led to can be challenged by exploring the merits of ‘social patents’, thus broadening the acknowledgement of knowledge creation and gendered markets. However, she also worries that this would allow the principle of ‘knowledge as property’ to be further entrenched in discourses of governance (Shiva and Holla-Bhar 1996; Shiva 2000). Such gendered analysis challenges the marketized nature of global institutions promoting market-based solutions to social and political problems, and stabilizing these solutions with the support of dominant epistemic elites (Taylor 2000). It also points to how, these marketized institutionalization of knowledge is not challenged, we experience great suffering – Shiva has written extensively on the farmer suicides in Andhra Pradesh in India where hundreds of farmers have died when unable to make debt repayments, leaving women and children vulnerable to loan sharks and violence.

Governance Institutions – While the realists and Marxists, from very different standpoints, have continued to favour an analysis of the state liberal

institutionalists and cosmopolitan theorists have mapped the shift from the sovereign state to governance institutions.

- Feminist institutionalists have pointed to the struggles around gender mainstreaming both within institutions and policy processes (Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2000, True 2003, Walby 2005). Issues of political participation and representation as well as the outcome of institutional deliberations have also been highlighted in this growing literature.
- However, feminist scholars, particularly Marxist and some postcolonial theorists, have been grappling with this changing role of the state. As the sites of production and reproduction shift within states, as new regimes of production make for different forms of work - part-time, flexible, concentrated in EPZs, migratory - women are having to organise differently. As global capital's presence is felt directly, less mediated through the state, and as local spaces are opened up to the forces of markets the challenges to global economic forces and organisations are also posing issues of political discourse and mobilisation for women. While the state continues to be a central focus of women's mobilisation on various issues, supra-territorial strategies are being increasingly employed in order to either counter the state, to delegitimise its position, or to mobilise global discursive regimes in their interests. This is because the relationship between a modernising state and a civil society within which it is configured, is a complex one. In this context to view the state as a unitary entity becomes paralysing, and regarding civil society as 'a space of uncoerced human association' perilous (Rai, 1996, p. 17-18).

However, a key insight of feminist politics - the challenge to the public/private divide - continues to be ignored in even the feminist analysis of institutions. Unlike postcolonial legal feminism, where there has been an exploration of parallel legal systems, there has been little analysis of how governance of polities (public spaces and issues) and governance of communities (private spaces and politics) are not parallel but imbricated and cannot be understood without reference to the other. Pratiksha Baxi, Shaheen Sardar Ali and I attempted to explore this in our study of 'honour killings' in India and Pakistan. In doing so, we tried to challenge state-centric analyses by focusing on local

political spaces. Crucially, we examined how parallel sovereignties work within the nation-state as parallel legal and carceral systems and how governance of polities and governance of communities are mutually imbricated to reproduce structures of power and oppression through spectacular practices of punishment and exile, in the context of a deepening economic and social crisis (Baxi, Rai, and Ali 2006). While these regulatory practices are particularly visible during/as crises, we also emphasized how the liberalization of the Indian economy spurred the policing of social boundaries in deeply gendered ways as young men migrated to cities and their families anticipated remittances to fulfill their consumer desires, fuelled by advertising and television. Young women then became the objects of concern for reproduction of community norms, crucial to the reproduction of caste, gender and class hierarchies.

We suggested that broadly, the *governance of community* shows the following characteristics:

1. first, it is aligned with the perpetuation of gendered norms and traditions. It involves *the reproduction of ideologies* of patriarchy as well as institutions of governing these – family, community and caste panchayats/councils as well as state based legal and carceral systems. By examining the phenomenon of ‘honour crimes’, which we argued is regulated in local spaces by caste based governance regimes, we suggested that in the name of culture the languages of hatred – racism, sexism and homophobia for example – are aired and those of alternative visions of community contained.
2. the *regulation and disciplining of the realm of the community* takes place through both formal and informal institutions, norms, discourses and performance of power – through caste, religious and ethnic local governing councils, modes of communications and excommunication, and also through spectacles of violence to subdue the rebels within communities. The state is mobilized in defence of the dominant social norms through constitutional, legal and policy frameworks as well as through modes of policy implementation – police personnel for example are often implicated in religious riots, in participating in or at least ignoring violence perpetrated against transgressors of community norms.

3. these boundaries are also defended and policed through demonstrations of violence, which while not always legitimated by all state fractions, is tolerated and even participated in by others. This means that such violence is seen as a ‘legitimate’ means of regulating communities, securing its cultural borders and insuring against transgression of its norms – from within and without.
4. these traditions bleed over time and space and ‘go global’ – diasporic communities take with them the burdens and the markers of community norms and rituals and *diasporic ‘legalities’* which regulate their life away from home. They help them to make personal sense of politicized otherness in strange lands. From the local to the global the governance of communities involves disciplinary modes of discursive as well as social power.
5. finally, as with governance of polities, however, the governance of communities is *constantly challenged and reshaped* by the struggles of individuals and groups both directly by crossing critical boundaries of race, caste and religion, of sexuality and of class.

What I want to emphasise here is that it is in the interplay of the two axes of governance institutions – of polities and communities - that the concept is best understood. And that both mainstream governance theorists as well as feminist scholars need to pay more attention to this interplay. One way of doing so would be to examine the methodologies of the exercise of power in and of communities and how these take shape in and through governance of polities. The politics of the spectacle is one such methodological prism.

If we examine the three arenas of market, institutions and ideology we find that all three are consolidated through and in the space of the unfolding spectacle of governance. Guy Debord argued in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967; 1995) that modern spectacle was “the autocratic reign of the market economy which had acceded to an irresponsible sovereignty, and the totality of new techniques of government which accompanied this reign” (1988:2). The spectacular power was, he suggested concentrated (totalitarian state power such as the Soviet Union) as well as diffuse (democratic systems such as the United States) and now global (1988). Global capitalism then depended on “the colonized social circuits that comprise spectacle – including

confidence in the market and the state, and an identification with commodity culture – and that to disrupt spectacle may have great and unpredictable consequences” (Stallabrass, 2006: 90). Building on this and the work of Foucault, Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* () argued that gendered power is a fiction that needs to be sustained in the domain of political economy through social performativity. Through the enactment of dominant gender roles we recognise, circulate and reproduce the meanings of masculinity and femininity and thus perpetuate gendered social hierarchies. Though both these interventions have been challenged, they do open up an important analytical seam for the construction of governance theory. Whether it is ‘the shock and awe’ of the Iraq war, the grey suited men pictured at G98 Summits surrounded by security barriers, the Abu Ghraib prisoners being carted in shackles or indeed, the counter-spectacles and alternative narratives of the Battle of Seattle, the World Social Forum and Live 8 Concerts or the Egyptian citizens gathered in Tahrir Square refusing to move without effecting change of governance structures in their country – that performances by bodies in spaces has power to move and hence needs to be taken seriously; that performance has affect as well as effect (Thrift, 2003).

In conclusion, I would like to note that feminist scholarship although diverse, has built on some key concepts that emerged from women’s struggles –

1. a gendered analysis of the political economy and the relations between states and markets
2. a challenge to the state reproduced division between the public and the private and
3. a commitment to transformation of gender relations that form the basis of formal and informal politics.

Feminist scholarship and activism also faces some challenges. Catherine Hoskyns and I have argued that contemporary “feminist challenge is limited by a current lack of focus on the importance of redistributive policies that are rooted in the structural inequalities of capitalist production and exchange” (p. 362). Fraser, of course, has worried about the success of feminist movements in winning the battles of recognition only to lose the war of redistribution.

I have argued in this paper that issues of gender have particular salience in the debates on governance. Unless we use the insights that have emerged from feminist theory and practice we will not be able to encompass the needs of the future in the conversations about the global present. Feminist debates on the state and democracy have relevance for the way in which political activism as well as the relational understanding between the state and global institutions of governance might be viewed. Gendered critiques of markets as not only uneven spaces of exchange, but as inefficient and distorted mechanisms that build upon unequal gendered social relations subject the normalisation of rationality of the market to rigorous scrutiny. The global governance debate needs to make a conceptual shift to embed these insights, developed through everyday struggle at local, state and global levels, as well as through engagements with and critiques of mainstream literature if theories of critical governance are to fundamentally challenge the structures-in-dominance within this field.

Thank you.

ⁱ See Brush (2003) Lionnet et al. (2004), Hawkesworth (2006), Rai and Waylen (2008a), and Waylen (2008).

ⁱⁱ See Hafner-Burton and Pollack (2002), Rai (2003), True (2003), and Walby (2005).

ⁱⁱⁱ See the National Women's Law Center's press release, "Unemployment Rate Rises Twice as Fast for Women," Washington, DC, September 5, 2008, at <http://www.nwlc.org/details.cfm?id=3341§ion=newsroom>.

^{iv} For instance, *U.S. News and World Report*'s online article "Financial Risk-Taking Linked to Testosterone: Manly Guys Take Biggest Financial Risks, Suggests a New Study," posted September 30, 2008. This source is no longer available online.