

# Ethical Models and Applications of Globalization: Cultural, Socio–Political and Economic Perspectives

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## Chapter 9

# Women and Globalization

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### ABSTRACT

*Economic globalization is a process tending towards neoliberal economic policy reforms (such as deregulation and privatization) and increases in capital, goods, services, and workforce movement. Economic theory on globalization's impacts on growth and wellbeing does seldom make distinctions between genders. It is frequently assumed that women will pay the cost of market liberalization by an unquestionable loss of jobs, or of high-income jobs. However, trade theory suggests that a growing international trade should benefit women, especially in developing countries. In order to determine the impacts of the globalization process on women's quality of life, equality, and status it is first necessary to define what is understood under such terms and which variables are involved in their measurement. There seems to be some consensus in identifying the set of variables that define women's quality of life: economic, political, and social.*

*There are two schools of thought in analyzing the effects of globalization on women. One school, basically optimistic but with some reserves, argues that participation in global trade and in financial markets will improve the situation of all citizens, including women. The other has got a more critical perspective and argues that economic globalization will further increase existing inequalities and will lead to new ones. Both sides of the discussion on the effects of globalization on women are valid, but there is a need to go beyond the sterile debate on whether globalization is good or bad, and reach a more constructive and wider-scope debate on how to achieve the best possible outcomes of globalization for women.*

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*Globalization must be analyzed from a multidimensional perspective and it is only by means of this process and by analyzing the real experiences of actors in adapting to globalization that we can understand the true outreach of globalization. According to this alternative perspective and in trying to develop a constructive debate on the impact of globalization on women a set of practices have to be detected, analyzed, and promoted in order to minimize the negative impacts of globalization on women and reinforce the positive ones. They include, among others: cultural change; sustained and mutually-agreed action programs among business schools, companies, and other interest groups such as the public sector; and removing the glass ceiling in MNCs, including codes of conduct as a part of their corporate social responsibility.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Economic globalization is a process tending towards neoliberal economic policy reforms (such as deregulation and privatization) and increases in capital, goods, services and workforce movement (Richards and Gelleny, 2007).

Economic theory on globalization's impacts on growth and wellbeing does seldom make distinctions between genders. It is frequently assumed that women will pay the cost of market liberalization by an unquestionable loss of jobs, or of high-income jobs. However, trade theory suggests that a growing international trade should benefit women, especially in developing countries (Bussmann, 2008).

Globalization will turn some into winners and others into losers. Examining whether economic globalization helps to improve some aspects of women's wellbeing, or if it rather hurts them, is important for various reasons (Gray, Kittilson and Sandholtz, 2006; Richards y Gelleny, 2007):

1. Excluding gender in theoretical and empirical research leads to a distortion of, or even a blindness to ubiquitous political and social developments.
2. Gender is one of the few division lines with social, cultural, political and economic implications worldwide. A focus on women allows us to address the impacts of globalization on a group which is at a disadvantage in all countries in the world.

3. Economic globalization is being pushed by governments; we often refer to it as a "top-down globalization". Those most negatively affected have no voice in its implementation process, and with no exception it is considered as a negative process leaving them without any option. Therefore, it is necessary to make the nature of such process more transparent.

This chapter intends to analyze the impact of globalization on women. It is divided into six sections. The first one analyzes what in most cases is understood as the dependent variable in the globalization process: quality of life, equality and status of women. The focus is on clarifying these terms, identifying the variables defining them and showing which indexes are most frequently use to assess them.

In the second and third sections the independent variable is analyzed, the globalization process and the two main areas it affects: economic aspects and socioeconomic ones.

The fourth section provides a comprehensive review of the literature addressing the impact of globalization on women's quality of life. It includes a wide-scope perspective of the two main schools of thought: the more optimistic view, which considers that globalization may contribute to improve women's quality of life; and a more critical school that considers that globalization will increased existing inequalities, and even create new ones.

The fifth section intends to provide an alternative perspective, which without denying the validity of the two previous perspectives, proposes a more constructive debate focusing on how to achieve the best possible results from globalization for women's quality of life.

The sixth section includes a series of final remarks advocating for the need of a cultural change in which both institutions and organizations, especially multinational companies (MNCs) have a role to play.

### **WOMEN'S QUALITY OF LIFE, EQUALITY, AND STATUS**

In order to determine the impacts of the globalization process on women's quality of life, equality and status it is first necessary to define what is understood under such terms and which variables are involved in their measurement.

Sudarkasa (1986) found in his comprehensive review of the concept "women's status" as used in social science two conceptions. The first one refers to the condition of women in terms of a series of rights and obligations. The second refers to the relative position of men and women within a double level hierarchy.

For Richards and Gelleny (2007) the first conception would mean the international legislation containing specific gender protection and guarantees. The second conception analyses women's status using men's status as a reference.

They suggest a further conception, in which women's status as the extent to which women are able, both in absolute and in relative terms, to exercise the rights encoded in a large corpus of international human rights law and to enjoy the benefits of those rights.

There seems to be some consensus in identifying the set of variables that define women's quality of life. According to Bradley and Khor (1993) any conceptualization or measurement of women's status must include three dimensions: economic, political and social.

The indexes used by the United Nations to measure quality of life and equality are the GDI (Gender-related Development Index) and the GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure).

The GDI is a variant of the HDI (Human Development Index). The GDI is a composite index that measures achievements in the same three basic dimensions addressed by the HDI: longevity (measured as life expectancy), knowledge (measured as a combination of adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio) and a decent life standard (measured as GNP per capita in purchasing power parity U.S. dollars):

The GEM is a composite index that measures gender inequality in three empowerment dimensions: economic participation and decision-making power (measured as women's participation in professional/technical positions and women's participation in positions such as legislators, senior officials and managers), political participation and decision-making (measured as women's share in parliamentary seats) and power over economic resources (measured as an estimate of women's income as compared to men's).

A further indicator that could also be used to measure women's economic, political and social rights (Richard and Gelleny, 2007) is the CIRI, Cingranelli-Richards Human Rights Dataset, which uses three indicators: the CIRI economic rights, (including the right of women to equal pay for equal work, free choice of job, paid employment without needing her husband's permission; equality in hiring and promotion practices, secure jobs, not suffering sexual harassment in the workplace, night work, working in hazardous jobs and work in the military or the police) the CIRI political rights (including women's right to vote, run for political office, elected and appointed government positions, political party affiliation and requests to governing parties) and the CIRI social rights (same inheritance, getting married on an equal footing with men, travelling abroad, getting a passport, conferring citizenship to children or husband, starting a divorce action, properties, acquisi-

tions, management, retaining property brought to marriage, participating in social, cultural and community activities, an education, freedom to choose residence or home, not suffering female genital mutilation in their childhood or adult age, and not suffering forced sterilization).

In general terms, studies analyzing the impact of globalization on women's quality of life and status use the following economic variables: participation of women in the labor market and type of work performed by women, more specifically if their becoming more present in agriculture, industry or services; the political variables refer to their representation in political processes measured basically by their share in government positions; and as social variables they focus on women's life expectancy, illiteracy rate, health, including maternal health and mortality, and reproductive rights and practices threatening women, such as genital mutilation among others.

In most cases these variables are considered as dependent variables of the globalization process.

## **ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF GLOBALIZATION**

Most of the research carried out in political science on globalization and internationalization has focused in a more implicit or a more explicit manner on cross-border economic transactions: Transnational economic links via trade, investments, corporate alliances and production networks.

The aspects most frequently analyzed refer to financial globalization, trade globalization and the structural adjustment policies required to attract funding.

Financial globalization operates along two main ways of action (Richards and Gelleny, 2007). The first one, foreign investors, including multinational corporations and foreign financial investors, who ensure their presence in economies all over the world by means of their portfolio investments.

Portfolio investments are associated to short-term financial commitments in developing countries. Opening domestic economies to free movement of international capital is a key element for economic development. Free financial flows such as portfolio investments allow firms from developing countries a better access to surplus international capital.

A significant problem for developing countries has been the lack of available funds to support the financial expansion of domestic firms. Small and medium sized enterprises that traditionally were left out of the financial markets do now have the financial expansion and technological improvement opportunities, which allow them to create jobs and increase wages.

In the second, financial globalization may pervade an economy through foreign direct investments (FDI), which are part of an international corporate structure to establish a permanent position in another economy. This may be achieved by building new facilities or by buying already existing facilities. Some studies show that FDI (Foreign Direct Investments) despite of not being a cure-all, do have positive impacts on a country's growth rate and on its overall socioeconomic wellbeing (Blomstrom, 1990; De Melo, 1999).

Trade globalization and trade liberalization through the reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers has been the traditional driving force behind globalization, increasing from seven percent of global output in 1950 to over 22 per cent in 1977 (Cohn, 2000). This exposes domestic firms to international competition. In order to keep high levels of domestic jobs and income, local firms must be able to compete effectively against international competition.

International trade liberalization agreements have led to a substantial increase of EPZ (Export Processing Zones). According to the United Nations (1999), in the 1990s there were around 93 developing countries with EPZs (Exporting Processing Zones), as compared to only 24 countries in 1976.

Structural adjustment policies (SAP) have been identified as complementary elements in the globalization process. Credit operations of international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank require from beneficiary countries to implement adjustment policies and certain neoliberal economic policies as a condition to receive loans.

For example, the World Bank has been paying attention to gender issues since the early 1970s (Gray, Kittilson and Sandholtz, 2006); however, it has increased its attention to these issue in recent years by funding projects in the fields of education, health, nutrition... Furthermore, projects linked to gender issues at design level have more than doubled in a variety of areas including agriculture, water, health, community development, legal reforms and violence on women. The Bank also cooperates with national credit agencies and institutions to provide women with information on micro-credits (World Bank, 2003)

## **SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GLOBALIZATION**

However, transnational economy is just one of the dimensions of globalization (Gray, Kittilson and Sandholtz, 2006). International communications are as important as economic exchanges.

Cross-border exchanges may involve people, ideas, information, fashions and tastes. Cross-national communication takes place through travel and tourism, telecommunications and the Internet. Many forms of cross-national exchange comprise both economic and socio-cultural dimensions.

International interactions, in addition to their economic aim, depend from and work for the dissemination of norms and ideas, resting on a base of shared norms. The more individuals become involved in international activities, the more they absorb de ideas and norms prevailing in the international society.

There is a socialization effect. Socialization is the process by which actors learn the ideas, values and norms of the social contexts they interact with. International organizations are, among other things, socialization and learning forums.

The more citizens and organizations of a country participate in these transnational exchanges, communication and organizations networks, the more prone they are to absorb ideas and norms. This happens to the extent that countries internalize norms and ideas disseminated by means of cross-national interaction, and incorporate them into their national policies, law and institutions.

Membership to international organizations, such as the UN (United Nations) and the World Bank, ratification of international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and even the links established between groups of individuals at local, national and international level, have helped to promote the dissemination of ideas and norms and led to the establishment of transnational networks in which information, ideas and political support are exchanged.

Since its foundation the UN (United Nations) has addressed women-related issues (it declared the “Women’s Decade” between 1976 and 1985; it has held several international conferences on women: in Copenhagen in 1980, in Nairobi in 1985, and in Beijing in 1995). UN (United Nations) conferences on women “have helped to channel the collective rumor of ideas and energy emanating from global women movements towards policy action prescriptions and commitments at state and nation level” (True and Mintrom, 2001:48-49). The Beijing Conference approved an innovative approach to address women inequality called “gender mainstreaming”, requesting governments to turn gender equality an explicit and central part of all policies and plans.

The UN (United Nations) adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, requesting government actions in differ-



ent policies aimed at supporting women, such as maternity leaves and access to child care. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) became the main international document on women's rights. Several studies have evidenced the substantial effects of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) on women equality, among others in Pakistan (Weiss, 2003) Turkey (Celik, 2004) and Costa Rica (Rojas, 2001; Brysk, 2005). However, according to Simmons (2004) the impacts of CEDAW have improved the access of women to education and birth control but have had a lesser impact in their employment share in the public sector.

UN (United Nations) conferences have also fostered the growth of transnational feminist movements. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have held parallel meetings to the UN conferences. The increasing numbers and activism of women NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) ensured that other United Nations and specialized agencies conferences would also take into account the gender dimension (Joachim, 2003).

With the development of NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century different organizations have been founded to defend the rights of women worldwide and to make further progress. Organizations such as *Women for Women International* are empowering women by means of education, medical care and support. They provide support for women living in conflict areas in which many of the resources and the growth of their communities have been devastated by war. Women learn new ways of making a living and they are educated in their political and economic rights. They are empowered to become leaders of their own communities and these women help other members of their communities to make their voices heard by increasing their implication in social and economic development. NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) have been the main actors in women's education and as a result they have produced some of the greatest female

leaders in our current global society (The Levin Institute, 2009).

The World Bank has also addressed women issues. Although little attention had been paid prior to 1990 to women issues, in the early 1990s the World Bank started to integrate them into their loan and development programs. After the Beijing Conference, in which the Bank was requested to evaluate how its programs affected women, the Bank started to seek information from women NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) in its policy processes and increased its spending in health, education and microcredit for women.

In conclusion, international organizations have articulated and actively disseminated transnational gender equality rules. Along that process they have empowered women groups and organizations, which can now use international treaties and declarations to put pressure on their governments to meet their international commitments in the field of gender equality and pursue economic reforms.

## **EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE VIEWS**

Globalization is a multidimensional process comprising economic, political, cultural and ideological change. There are two schools of thought in analyzing the effects of globalization on women (Richards and Genelly, 2007; Bussmann, 2009; Davids and Van Driel, 2009; UNESCO, 2009; The Levin Institute, 2009; Gray, Kittilson and Sandholtz, 2006; Oostendorp, 2009).

One school, basically optimistic but with some reserves, argues that participation in global trade and in financial markets will improve the situation of all citizens, including women. The other has got a more critical perspective and argues that economic globalization will further increase existing inequalities and will lead to new ones.

The optimistic school proposes in general terms that economic advantages will arise in the form of



a greater agency for women in the globalization era. The first advantage results from greater employment opportunities outside of the household.

Indeed, globalization, including a greater openness to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has led to a massive incorporation of women into the labor markets. Especially in low-income countries foreign multinationals (MNCs) frequently make better paid jobs available for women.

Employment in multinationals (MNCs) accounts for a growing share of female labor in developing countries since the main focus lies on exports as a way to achieve economic growth. Jobs in MNCs in developing countries tend to be better paid than equivalent ones in domestic firms (Gray *et al*, 2006). Thus the increasing access of women to employment under globalization has contributed to narrow the gender income gap leading to an improvement of their position to live an independent life.

The service sector has become the leading sector in the growth of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) activity export in many developing countries. MNCs (multinationals) in the service sector are viewed as representing new sources of relatively well-paid and long term employment opportunities for women. With the notable increase of women income, their acknowledged economic value also increases and their social status tends to improve.

The increase of investment requirements by MNCs (multinationals) may also lead to an expansion of women's education. The introduction of new technologies in the manufacturing or service industry increases the minimum educational requirements of labor. Thus, MNCs generate the need for trained female workers in their production facilities. Technology dissemination may contribute to "liberate women from the bondage of the patriarchal extended family, restrictive religious beliefs, and tedious agricultural labor" resulting in improved status via "educational expansion, increased employment opportunities, and a reduction in family size" (Marshall, 1985: 219).

Moreover, MNCs (multinationals) in industrialized countries frequently export labor regulations and practices to their subsidiary operations overseas that generally transcend local discriminatory practices against women and other poor. For example, MNCs frequently ignore local discriminatory hiring practices and apply policies that accept minimum occupational health requirements, equal pay for equal work and affirmative action (Mears, 1995).

The link between globalization and income growth is especially robust in developing countries. With the decline of the commercial hegemony of the United States in the wake of globalization, many developing countries have mobilized a limited amount of resources to create competitive advantage, significantly increasing the living standard of its citizens (Cohn, 2000:229). Women previously excluded from the mainstream labor force have been able to find employment allowing them to meet their own basic needs and to contribute to the needs of other family members.

According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (2000:42) the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has substantial long-term employment potential for women. The largest increase in new employment opportunities immediately after NAFTA was in women's jobs. Globalization proponents argue that the low earnings from maquilas are an improvement over most women's previous situation of no wages whatsoever. This income is also said to spur a sense of self-assurance, encouraging women to be more assertive and escape familial supervision (Acker, 2004; Bhagwati, 2004; Deo, 2006)

Supporters of neoliberal economic policies further argue that Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) improve the economic performance by requesting receiving countries to implement free market policies. Such policies include reduction of barriers to the flow of goods and capital, privatization of domestic economies, inflation control and reduction of governmental bureaucracy. The implementation of such policies by previously

protectionist countries minimizes the role of the State in the economy, thus resulting in a transfer of more power to individual citizens. In this economic environment individuals are better positioned to benefit from their own talents and gain power from having their own jobs (Deo, 2006). Thus, women are better positioned to exercise greater control over their choices in life.

With globalization women will enjoy more options in income-producing employment; more employment opportunities mean that there are more ways of breaking off from unequal relations; such options entrust women with greater opportunities to take their work and skills elsewhere. One of the first places in which women benefit from better employment opportunities is the household, since they achieve greater personal autonomy and independence, more control on household budgets and a greater basis to request men to become involved in household work. As households become more dependent from women's income, their status and relative power improves. These change processes at macroeconomic level are the ones that lead to a renegotiation of the division of tasks by gender in the household (United Nations Development Program, 1999).

"In addition to the relatively enhanced power of women in the household associated to paid jobs, there is a second important outcome, their greater participation in the public sphere and their potential emergence as public actors" (Sassen, 1996:27).

At national level, higher levels of economic development are associated to higher levels of equality for women. More open economies in terms of both trade and capital flows seem to have an impact mainly on women's political rights rather than on their economic rights. "Women not only benefit from a greater economic pie, it is also... that their share of the pie increases as the pie becomes bigger" (Apodaca, 1998:11). Higher levels of commerce and capital flow openness seem to have an impact main on the political rights of women rather than on their economic rights.

Economic changes associated to globalization are also the seeds for cultural changes improving the situation of women. Economic growth is just one part of the story. Substantial changes in social norms, beliefs and values are also required to reaffirm the role of women in society and politics. Increased support attitudes towards women equality provide a more fertile ground for specific policies helping women to achieve equal rights and opportunities.

To the extent that economic globalization expands the employment opportunities available to women and increases their independent income, this improves their physical quality of life and creates additional opportunities for them in their homes and in their social life.

Trade and Foreign Direct Investment have differential impacts on women. Trade generally improves economic growth and therefore, it improves physical quality of life (measured by life expectancy) and educational level, but may also displace employment in local industries, reducing employment opportunities for women. However, foreign direct investment is more likely to create new jobs, many of which will be available to women.

Certainly, women frequently retain the highest volume of unpaid household work, which entails a double burden. Moreover, depending upon the cultural, class and family context not all women will benefit from paid employment. But what is most important, is that independent economic resources and opportunities provide women with greater chances and the agency to pursue their collective interests (Gray, Kittilson and Sandholtz, 2006)

From the more critical perspective, globalization confines women to low-income, low-status and often part-time jobs, which reinforces their subordinate position and perpetuates the poor consideration of female work in most societies.

Multinational corporation demands for cheaper and more flexible jobs have encouraged offshore production using women with low wages. Global-

ization leads to a feminization of the workforce, it confines them to the lowest-paid jobs. The removal of barriers to transnational investments far from empowering women, leads them to extremely bad jobs in the underground economy where women suffer gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The competition of foreign companies curbs women's efforts to start local micro-businesses.

Critics reject the statement that MNC's (multinationals) investments provide economic benefits to women and point at Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, where the economic payback for women has been limited, the wage gap between women and men continues to be relatively large, and where MNC's investment has failed to redirect that money toward improving the lives of its citizens.

Those who oppose economic globalization indicate that there is less and less direct investment in developing countries since MNCs subcontract work to small firms in which there is a predominance of women working at home, which prevents them from forming trade unions and transfers certain production costs to the household (electric power, spares...); and even when they establish direct operations in those countries, this hurts women who cannot produce at mass scale, which is what current trade requires in order to be cheap (Pearson, 2003; Dugger, 2004).

The adjustment and stability policies developing countries are forced to implement in order to attract and maintain international investments and direct investment flows do also have a negative impact on women. Stability policies often involve limiting budgetary spending, cutting taxes, and privatizing government services, thereby having a negative effect on the poor and women since these groups have limited political influence to project programs benefiting them (Richards and Gelleny, 2007). At national level structural adjustments and market liberalization policies are especially negative for women since they lead to cuts in public jobs which are disproportionately held by women, to cuts in social programs targeting women and prevent workforce organization and association.

MNCs (multinationals) have established a competitive environment that encourages a "race to the bottom" in developing countries as far as policies are concerned. The resulting feminization of employment leads to lower standards for women, who tend to be relegated to perform minimally important tasks in society (Bergeron, 2001; Acker, 2004).

Critics of globalization also point out that the benefits of trade liberalization are not equally distributed but rather favor firms in developing countries that can move faster and with less effort across international borders (Rodrick, 1997; Chen and Carr, 2002).

Export promotion and trade liberalization policies lead to an expansion of female employment in exporting industries, including textiles, electronics, pharmaceutical and computer components. However, globalization of production and the search for flexible work patterns leads to a deterioration of working conditions (Standing, 1999).

Some of the followers of this critical perspective acknowledge that the picture of women as workers, even if it may be mixed, is widely discouraging. Some women may benefit from the new jobs, but their work is highly exploiting and characterized by low wages, poor working conditions, suppression of trade unions and poor opportunities of security or progress (Wright, 1995).

Moreover, in an increasingly volatile economic context women are frequently the first ones to suffer in times of financial crisis. They are further affected by the environmental damage caused by industrial development; they are who suffer most from all environmental problems since they are responsible for sustaining a majority of families.

The negative consequences of globalization are best evidenced in maquilas<sup>1</sup>, in which firms find abundant, cheap and docile labor, basically female. The profile of the women working in maquilas is as follows: young, little knowledge, belonging to excluded population sectors and poor or no working experience<sup>2</sup>. The presence of maquilas is promoted by free trade and is backed

by the governments of the countries in which they are established<sup>3</sup>.

These countries offer to companies a permissive legislation that does not respect human, labor and environmental rights and in some occasions the cost of maquilas are subsidized by the governments themselves (industrial tax-free areas). For governments these work patterns have some advantages since they provide employment opportunities to unskilled individuals, which leads them to support their establishment and support the relevant companies.

Trade liberalization is also a source of costs for the governments of developing countries because it requires them to lower their tariffs and forces them to find alternative tax revenues and/or cancel expenditure in social programs, which results in a higher workload for women in their households and reduces their access to education (Pearson, 2003).

With regards to Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), those opposing economic globalization view the impositions of the IFM (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank as negative for women's status. These institutions require countries to adopt neoliberal policies as a condition to receive credits. Cuts in public employment and social programs which are frequently mandatory in the SAPs (Structural Adjustment Policies) affect women in an especially negative manner.

The deflationist policies promoted at macroeconomic level are also in odds with equality and wealth generation to the extent that they limit the potential growth capacity of economic activity and employment. Ideologically they rest on two principles. First: Markets are much more effective than public intervention, which entails a deregulation of all markets, including the labor markets and the establishment of a frame of action that is of basically full freedom of movement of capitals, especially financial. And second: considering inflation as the main economic problem, causing high interest rate, wage control and public expenditure reduction policies.

The combination of both measures at global scale has led to high unemployment rates, the generalization of precarious employment and a continued reduction of the presence of the state by means of social expenditure, all of it resulting in a worldwide increased vulnerability of the least favored groups, especially women (Galvez and Torres, 2010). The major deregulation and the increasing flexibility of labor markets have affected men and women differently along countries, but have led to a process of a contradictory nature: On the one hand they have favored the incorporation of women into paid employment, but this is linked to a deterioration of working conditions as part of the race promoted by deflationist policies to reduce costs to the minimum (Beneria, 2005).

Globalization critics have also mentioned that the policies recommended by international credit agencies are frequently ignored by developed countries. Developed countries have implemented tariff and non-tariff barriers to protect their national production, especially in agriculture and in the textile industry, which interestingly enough, are the economic sectors in which developing countries enjoy a comparative advantage.

## **AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW**

Globalization will turn some people into winners and others into losers. The possibilities and benefits resulting from it are not an unalloyed good. "Women are neither mere and simple victims, nor free and unchained actors" (Mills, 1999: 11).

Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen (Sen, 1999) considers an essential aspect in order to encourage a fair development and reduce the inequalities fostered by globalization is to concentrate on the active role of women's agency rather than only on women's well-being, as a way to promote social change. Women are thus seen as "*dynamic promoters of social transformations that can alter the lives of both women and men*". This is possible through women's empowerment, one of

the central issues in the process of development for many countries in the world today. Women's empowerment does not just include aspects such as education, access to land or capital ownership, opportunities in the labor market or the nature of their employment contracts, but also family and social attitude towards the economic activities performed by women, and the social or economic circumstances supporting those attitudes or preventing them from changing. These issues have a direct bearing on women's well-being but their reach goes beyond that.

According to Davids and Van Driel (2009) the analytic frameworks of globalization do not address globalization by itself; it is rather taken for granted. This leads to the production and reproduction of a given orthodoxy, based on dichotomous thinking (local/cultural/traditional as female vs. global/economic/modern as male), which ignores the active role of women in the globalization process. They are defined simply as victims of the process or heroines of it, when none of these depictions matches the complex reality women and men are facing in the globalization process.

In their opinion, and contributing what they call a "gender lens", globalization must be analyzed from a multidimensional perspective (a symbolic dimension – stereotypes, images such as the representation of what is male and what is female -, a practical dimension – socially institutionalized practices -, and a subjective dimension – how individuals address their identities and juggle with all kinds of contradictory representations within institutional and practical boundaries) and it is only by means of this process and by analyzing the real experiences of actors in adapting to globalization that we can understand the true outreach of globalization. Globalization is neither good nor bad in itself. It will be positive for some and negative for others based on how they manage the process.

Moreover, women are not homogeneous or undifferentiated. Some of the most important differences among women are between groups

of workers, based on their skills, work and sector classification, permanence or safety, formal with access to legal safeguards or informal, based on gender, religion or ethnicity, poorer or richer employment conditions, and with more or less labor rights (Prieto-Carrón, 2008).

In analyzing arguments for and against globalization and on their effects on women, two main conclusions emerge (Ibeh, Carter, Poff and Hamill, 2008). The first one is that both sides of the discussion on the effects of globalization on women are valid. The second, and most important, is that there is a the need to go beyond the sterile debate on whether globalization is good or bad, and reach a more constructive and wider-scope debate on how to achieve the best possible outcomes of globalization for women.

In the last decade there has been an important process to try to alleviate all the above-mentioned negative aspects. From a legal perspective, the enactment of regulation and the establishment of several international organizations have meant a substantial effort and proposed different alternatives. The International Labor Association has become a fundamental reference in terms of labor rights. By means of several conventions<sup>4</sup> the idea is to enforce compliance with the rules and principles, and the fundamental labor rights, so that individual can work decently; the creation of new opportunities for women and men to ensure that they have a decent work and income; enhancing the outreach and effectiveness of social protection; strengthening three-party negotiation and social dialogue and promotion of mainstreaming actions, such as those related to decent work or gender equality.

Another reference in the field of labor rights that must be highlighted are the actions of trade unions. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) sponsored the 7<sup>th</sup> World Women's Conference (1999) which discussed the negative effects of the indiscriminate trade opening and the need to establish a global action platform in the face of globalization. Along the same line



the Central Única de Trabajadores (CUT) considers that globalization leads to greater exclusion, especially in the case of women.

In 2009 the ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation, which groups together all international confederations) and the UNI (Union Network International, made up by the service sector trade unions), together with the WageIndicator Foundation, which provides websites on labor and wages from 35 countries, and the University of Amsterdam – specialized in international questionnaires supporting the decent work, wages and industrial relations agenda – started a new project to raise awareness among young women on their need to know, by means of trade union campaigns and the Internet, the labor situation of other women working in their same or in similar positions.

All the proposed measures are insufficient if they are not accepted by the relevant firms. For example, if we consider what is happening in the maquilas, since the governments are accomplices to everything that takes place in them – they support them on the benefits they get from them-, it is difficult to find real measures to improve their situation. It is useless to say that trade unions will be established if despite being established by Law the freedom to organize trade unions, trade union repressions is undertaken at management level and workers must either abandon them (using to this end all types of actions, including physical violence) or they will be fired.

It is possible therefore to say that although the current legal situation helps to improve the effects of globalization in some cases, it is insufficient, if such measures are not accepted by the firms' management, which in some cases have not even got decision-making power on employment contracts since that would class with their shareholder policy.

According to Gray, Kittilson and Sandholtz (2006), a cultural change is necessary for an institutional change to take place. Changes in attitudes and values are key elements for women to achieve greater levels of equality; however, this process

does not work in just one direction, but rather in a mutual feedback manner, in which changes in institutions may lead to cultural changes.

For these authors in particular, participation at international organizations and treaties aimed at promoting women's equality may give a new shape to national attitudes. Greater international communication and exchange breaks the ground for new opportunities and expose countries to new rules that in recent decades have promoted women's equality.

Ibeh, Carter, Poff and Hamill (2008) also support the idea of cultural change but referred to organizations. In their research on what the main Business Schools, their business practices and networks, are doing to promote the participation of women in the management of global organizations, they suggest the fundamental need for a cultural change in organizations and sustained and mutually-agreed action programs among Business Schools, companies and other interest groups such as the public sector, which can contribute adequate employment and retention targets, with incentives to companies and by supporting the work of support teams or even by activating them in case they do not exist yet.

Insch, McIntyre and Napier (2008) also address this change process but within the specific realm of multinational corporations (MNCs). For them if removing the glass ceiling is positive for businesses because it leads to disappointment and high skilled women turnover rates, it is even more important for MNCs since these women may have acquired valuable knowledge and skills from the company which might be of great use for the organization. They consider that breaking this glass ceiling is a responsibility of both multinationals requiring expatriates, and of women managers themselves, for which they are assigned an active process in this change process that globalization is.

They suggest the need for MNCs to develop different strategies depending upon the stage women are in the international position assignment process (expatriates).



Thus in the stage prior to assignment they recommend a review of the selection criteria for international positions, the treatment of “dual-career” couples, a change in attitudes towards women success giving greater value to female attributes, evaluating and changing policies and procedures connected to expatriate women selection, training and repatriation, the need to provide pre-departure training, and making greater efforts to incorporate women into the organization’s formal and informal networks.

During the assignment stage they recommend a careful selection of the target country for the initial assignment of women expatriates, considering countries where they will enjoy greater opportunities to adapt, develop and grow fast – to this, it seems that countries with high risk aversion and masculinity scores would be less adequate –; taking into account that some women may want to regulate their assignment abroad in order to adapt it to their family life, ongoing training and mentoring processes during the international assignment are crucial for continuous success of women expatriates and their eventual return to the home organization; and having in place solid mentoring programs during all stages along the expatriation experience, an element in which Linehan and Scullion (2008) also agree.

The strategies MNCs (multinationals) should develop after the assignment have to do with the need to ensure that women expatriates are repatriated in a satisfactory manner, making a particular emphasis on providing a continuous mentoring and training program to expatriates returning home, reviewing repatriation policies and giving the chance to women expatriates to use their new experience at their return to their home country.

In the language of good governance gender equality is a good thing as it becomes equated with economic growth. This is the extrinsic value of the principle of gender equality (economic growth or efficient resource management). As Grosser and Moon (2005: 532-3) state the key question is to encourage business to advance the gender

equality agenda of government and civil society and held accountable on these issues.

A different way of addressing the negative consequences of globalization on women and attempt to bring about social change starting by an institutional change would be to do it from the outside of the organization, using the tools provided by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which have already been implemented in the market.

As stated in the Green Paper “... being socially responsible does not just mean meeting the legal requirements, but rather going beyond in their compliance, investing ‘more’ in human capital, the environment and the relations with interlocutors” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001: 7). It is a matter of evaluating firms from a social perspective and to penalize those that do not follow certain patterns, labeling them as “inappropriate”.

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development defines Corporate Social Responsibility as the “ongoing commitment of firms to maintain an ethic behavior and contribute to economic development, at the same time they improve the quality of life of their employees and families, of the community in which they operate and of society in general”. This change in approach results from the fact that although firms are private entities, they depend from the consumers that purchase their products, from the employees that produce them and from the investors that provide the capital. In conclusion, they depend from the society they are part of, which implements the rules and structures that allow them to operate (social contract).

Anshen (1970) established the need for an implicit social contract between firms and society: society proposes the rules that structure the objectives and responsibilities of firms according to the prevailing social interests (formerly, rapid economic growth, currently improvement of quality of life and preservation of the environment),

so that it allows firms to operate if they meet their part of the contract.

The extent to which a firm may address ethical principles may be considered from a restrictive approach, according to which the relations between firm and ethics are limited to a minimum deontological code guaranteeing that the regulations are complied with and solving practical management problems, or from a much broader one, which considers that firms have a responsibility towards society, and it is not just a matter of not hurting it but also to improve it by using their power and influence (Alonso, 2007). Along the same line Wood (1991) articulated three levels of corporate responsibility (institutional, corporate and individual); in turn, Porter and Kramer (2006), mentioned four components (Legal Responsibility, Ethical responsibility, Economic responsibility and Philanthropic responsibility).

There is a general consensus over the role played by firms over the last two centuries as a fundamental driver of progress and of the wellbeing of our civilization. However, whereas for many years citizens had full trust in the business world in recent decades there has been an absolute crisis of confidence and a deep disappointment. Firms are accused of having generated inequalities, poverty and social discrimination, of having focused on uncontrolled growth leading to the destruction of the environment and the natural resources, to look only for their enrichment, no matter whether it is just or unjust. Firms and society move in diverging paths that have to be brought together. This may be possible starting from business ethics.

The operation of any firm causes an impact that reaches beyond its close environment; this is known as externalities or collateral effects. They may be positive (development, investment, job creation, culture...) or negative (pollution, traffic jams, greater gender gaps...). Firms will try to benefit from their positive externalities.

There is the possibility for consumers to reward companies with positive externalities, although it is true that they are rarely willing to pay more for

a product, even if the process is environmental-, society- and individual-friendly; notwithstanding, experience shows that individuals are willing to penalize those firms with negative externalities such as pollution, child labor or sexist discrimination. One example might be the boycott launched against an important multinational company, whose sales decreased when it was found that it was using child labor in their plants. Indeed, the company had to pay a high sum after the case had been denounced by a consumer<sup>5</sup>.

The current worldwide economic crisis has caused devastating impacts in terms of unemployment and increased inequalities. Notwithstanding, there are still people that support Friedman's argument (1970) that "*the only business of business is business*", which would imply that a firm would have social responsibility only when it is directly responsible for the damage caused. Paradoxically, there are numerous experts that defend that the fundamental cause of the current economic crisis is the liberalization of financial markets (Elson, 2010; Gálvez and Torres, 2010; Young and Schuberth, 2010).

The response of many western governments to this situation has been to turn the private financing crisis into a public financing crisis by means of a reduction of public expenditure. According to Elson (2010), this fiscal restriction is in turn a consequence of trade liberalization, which reduces import and export tariffs and fosters competition to attract multinationals with cuts in corporate taxes, temporary tax exemptions and reductions in the highest levels of the personal income tax.

When the tax "elbow-room" is reduced, it is likely that the programs that are maintained are those that benefit the groups that enjoy more power, whereas those targeting the less-favored face a reduction. In the European Union the tax elbow-room is severely limited by the European Central Bank rules, which required members to keep inflation under a given threshold, although there is no bottom for it. This asymmetric target incorporates a deflationist trend into the monetary

policy of the Eurozone, since low inflation rates tend to go together with increasing unemployment and a decrease in domestic output.

In view of this situation, Young and Schuberth (2010) support a reform of financial governance, which is overwhelmingly male-dominated, recommending that at least 40% of all management positions in financial institutions and regulatory agencies be filled by women, as a way to give them a voice and change the culture of such institutions.

CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) appears here as an instrumental tool for equality that allows for the empowerment of women by means of their greater presence in economic life. Despite of its strong environmental bias, the scope of CSR has been extended with the globalization of human rights, which emerge as a key element, especially in the case of MNCs (multinationals) operation abroad.

The incorporation of corporate good governance into CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), has allowed for its rapid dissemination in the business world, since good governance codes are a common practice in companies due to the demands of investors and the rules governments are enacting to enhance transparency and information to the public.

In 2003 the European Commission (Commission of the European Communities, 2003) established four categories of instruments available to organizations in order to incorporate corporate social responsibility practices:

- Principles and codes, such as the UN Global Compact of the year 2000.
- Certifications and management systems used to measure and report compliance with CSR practices by means of independent auditors: ISO 9000, ISO 14001, EMAS, SA 8000.
- Indexes/ratings that rank firms on the basis of their responsible practices, such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index or the FTSE4Good.

- Reporting, with the purpose of providing information on corporate activities regarding CSR: Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

From the viewpoint of the management systems available to measure and report CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) practices in the firm, they will become a useful instrument to achieve equality of this principle is listed as one of the corporate values and the top management shares this explicit commitment to equality of men and women (i.e. it is a strategic planning element).

Second, it is necessary to design a system that is able to connect CSR to the operation of the processes determining the equality of women within the firm. The basis for the system would be a series of significant, consistent, representative and reliable indicators that would serve as a link between the values and the internal processes determining their fulfillment (Carantoña, 2009). It is necessary to take into account the difficulty underlying this process, due to the fact that equality cannot be reflected by means of quantitative parity indicators (percentage of female workforce, percentage of women managers). Thus, identical data on presence of women can have behind them totally different baseline situations and mask recruitment and selection processes that are causing a gender bias. Therefore, equality indicators should show both the diversity situation of the firm and any potential causes leading to horizontal or vertical segregation. In order to ensure the absence of a gender bias, horizontal diversity indicators should address staff recruitment and selection processes, whereas vertical segregation indicators should address the different aspects of career promotion with regards to equality.

A good starting point for the design of the system would be carrying out a gender audit, which would allow for a diagnosis of the situation of the firm with regards to those elements determining gender equality within the framework of its social responsibility system. Such elements can be

grouped into seven blocks and must be linked to the industry as a whole, and other characteristics conditioning the firm's activity.

1. Employee selection and promotion.
2. Measures aimed at reconciling work, family and personal life.
3. Sexual harassment in the workplace.
4. Safety regulations.
5. Training with gender perspective in the organization.
6. Non-sexist language and images in the organization.
7. Wage discrimination.

Once the baseline situation of the company is known a good way to connect CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) to the improvement of processes could be the implementation of quality improvement models, such as certification with ISO Standards or the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model.

The drafting process of the ISO 26000 standard started in 2005. It is intended to be a guide on social responsibility helping firms in their management. The new ISO 26000 is being drafted in line with ISO 9000 (regarding quality management), ISO 14000 (regarding environmental performance) and OSHAs 18000 (regarding management of occupational risk prevention processes). It shall be published during 2010, and at least initially, it is not expected to be subject to certification, which may hinder its application in those firms that would implement it looking for the social legitimacy of the certifying authority rather than for the improvement of management in corporate social responsibility processes.

There is a pilot experience in Spain financed with European Union structural funds aimed at introducing the equal opportunities principles in the quality management or business excellence system already implemented by organizations (Fundación Mujeres, 2007). A priori, the criteria related to equal opportunities for men and women are almost inexistent in organizational

quality management practices. ISO 9000 systems address aspects connected to human resources management linked mainly to the optimization of organizational resources and productivity (skill levels of each individual...), as well as the working environment (where to promote motivation, satisfaction, development and performance); however, they do not address respecting equal opportunities as a criterion to be taken into account in good business management. Likewise, although the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model makes specific mention to equal opportunities in some criteria and subcriteria, they are not too specific and do not take into account mainstreaming the gender perspective.

Both the ISO 9000 Standards and the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) propose process management as the basic principle allowing firms to analyze the different activities they carry out as an interrelated set. This entails a direct advantage for organization, not only because of the competitive advantage provided by the external acknowledgement of the fact that their operations meet certain parameters or requirements, but also because it requires an internal analysis which enables them to detect potential management errors and to define improvement strategies. Total quality management in organizations implies therefore, not only achieving certain levels of performance or compliance with requirements, but also constantly reconsidering new broader outreach objectives by means of a critical analysis of the organization's actions within an ongoing PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) improvement cycle in the seven areas of the firm into which it is necessary to incorporate the equal opportunities principle. A result of this experience is the production of AENOR's UNE 194001 Standard on Equal Opportunities, which will allow organizations to certify this aspect in the future and receive the "Equality in The Firm" label published in the Official Journal of Spain on the 11th march 2009.

It is also necessary to include the drafting of Codes of Conduct in this cultural change process businesses must implement as a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Prieto-Carrón, 2008).

Codes of Conduct have not taken into account gender-related aspects and this is the case even when they are in place in women labor intensive sectors. Codes do not reflect specific forms of discrimination on grounds of gender. Discrimination elements such as sexual harassment, maternity leaves and the need to care for the children shall be included in them.

Furthermore, working women tend to be excluded from the Code of Conduct adoption process and to know little about them. “The specific position of working women within the industry should be the starting point for all Codes, rather than having them merely include a generic anti-discrimination clause” (Hale and Shaw, 2001, 524). Codes must be sensitive to gender in their design and implementation and women should be involved along the entire process.

Research on working women and Codes has focused on two levels of analysis: micro and macro. Recommendations at the micro level include the need for records on the gender balance ratio of supervisors; documentation on the good practices of employers; taking into account all workers; pro-rata rights and equal rights; and, affordable child care facilities. With regards to monitoring, proposals relate to the inclusion of organizations representing women and the representation of all groups of workers including women in monitoring and verification procedures. Other advice is to include women in auditing teams, to conduct separate interviews with women and to produce gender training for auditors.

Codes of Conduct and auditing are about documenting the problems that exist without asking why those problems persist. They fail to deal with deeply embedded structures of inequality, such as low wages and the segmentation of women into the lowest paid and more insecure jobs. At the

macro level it is important to look beyond these initiatives such as codes to the broader picture: how the private sector, civil society, international organizations relations and corporations are involved in public policy formulations and how companies are involving in driving labor standards (Prieto-Carrón, 2008).

A further benefit firms may obtain from the incorporation of socially responsible practices would be the increase of their stock-market capitalization, due to the strong development of Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) that has taken place in recent years. The fact that there is growing number of investors that takes social or environmental criteria into account in their investment decisions is leading companies to adopt CSR criteria more and more, in order to gain an advantageous position in the access to financial resources.

Corporate image is not going to be positive if the firm’s behavior does not comply with the generally accepted ethical patterns. As AECA (2009) has pointed out, firms disclosing information on their responsible practices can mobilize investors by conveying the idea that their sustainability strategy may be an indicator of high-quality management. In conclusion, those companies carrying out actions considered to be “not responsible” will suffer severely since they will be excluded from the portfolios of “responsible” managers.

Socially responsible indexes intended to serve as a reference for investors have increased in recent years, which evidences the substantial expansion of SRI (Socially Responsible Investing). The most important ones are: the Domini 400 Social Index, which was the first one issued in the market in 1990, the Dow Jones Sustainability Index Group and the FTSE4Good Index Series.

All of the above indexes include social, environmental and corporate governance criteria, which they use to label a company as socially responsible or to exclude it from this group. The elements highlighted by the indexes are quite general and the information about the companies comes mostly from questionnaires answered and



reports disclosed by the firms themselves. Taking into account the information included in the guides of the different existing indexes, and focusing on the social criteria, not intending to underscore those regarding the environment and corporate governance, we want to highlight the criteria most taken into account. It should not be forgotten that the criteria are subject to a study process in which different stakeholders are involved: interest groups, environmental and corporate responsibility experts, the investment community, the business sector, governmental organizations and NGOs (Non-governmental organizations). They can be summarized as follows:

- Are labor practices and standards appropriate?
- What is the firm behavior like?
- Does the firm take human rights into account?
- How are its relations with the community?
- How is its human capital?

All the above issues push firms intending to be labeled as responsible to improve two basic aspects: First, they help in achieving equal opportunities for men and women; second, they improve the situation of workers.

With regards to equal opportunities there are gender indicators in CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) reports, such as the breakdown of the workforce by gender, time required for promotion by gender, form of access to the job and recruitment outcomes, etc. Information must be obtained by means of interviews to the employees in charge of hiring.

With regards to the objective of improving working conditions, one must be very cautious when obtaining the information. In some cases it is difficult to know how firms conduct their operations because they are not interested in being transparent. There is a profound ignorance of what is actually underlying each productive process. With regards to this it is necessary to

acknowledge that it is a true fraud that products using labor from developing countries in which working conditions are not guaranteed can put on their products the classic *made in Spain* label, for example.

## **FINAL REMARKS**

Globalization is a complex phenomenon which is highly polarized between its passionate supporters at one end of the spectrum and its radical detractors. Although the contributions of both sides are valid, it is necessary to go beyond this sterile debate on whether globalization is good or bad, and achieve a more constructive perspective and a more comprehensive discussion aimed at analyzing how to obtain the best possible outcomes of globalization (Ibeh, Carter, Poff and Hamill, 2008); or, as Osland (2003) said, and move away from this polarization that prevents a constructive dialogue and the achievement of lasting solutions.

According to Davids and Van Driel (2009) globalization must be analyzed from a multidimensional perspective taking into account the real experiences of the actors in their adaptation to globalization. It requires a systemic approach (Osland, 2003) in which the frontiers of debate are expanded to produce a picture of globalization as an unequal process that takes into account both positive and negative consequences, both winners and losers, with mixed impacts. Globalization is neither a cure-all nor an absolute plague.

In the case of women the positive aspects have to do with a greater agency for women, greater employment opportunities out of the household, a massive incorporation of women into the labor-market, narrowing the income gap, which leads to an improvement of their economic status, improvement of women's education thanks to the introduction of new technologies, application of labor regulations to overcome traditional discriminating practices, improvement of their position within the household by achieving a



greater personal autonomy and independence, increased participation in the public sphere and a reinforcement of women's role in society, since globalization leads to substantial changes in social rules, beliefs and values.

The negative aspects refer to the confinement of women in low-income and low-status jobs which reinforce their subordinate position, a limited economic payback for women, increase of home employment, making it difficult for them to set up trade unions and that leads to increased expenses in their personal economy, a cut in public jobs mainly held by women, being pushed to performing tasks with minimal importance for society, being directly affected by the financial crisis, and being the most affected ones by cuts in social policies.

Globalization in its current status includes compensations, which must be taking account at the time of calculating the cost of global businesses. Its positive aspects must be taken into account, but the same applies to the critical voices, that as Kobrin (2001) says, can be the canary in the mine, the warning signal of globalization and the role of MNCs.

A cultural change is necessary for the institutional change (Gray, Kittilson and Sandholtz, 2006), a cultural change in organizations (Ibeh, Carter, Poff and Hamill, 2008) and a cultural change in the specific setting of MNCs (Insch, McIntyre and Napier, 2008) to occur.

Business must have a wider framework of shared social valued, which should include at least, some degree of agreement regarding social justice and the common wellbeing (Osland, 2003). MNCs must enter into a dialogue with all of their diverse stakeholders, including NGOs, since critical voices and clients frequently share more links than those firms view.

The accounting systems used both by MNCs and Governments must take into account environmental and social costs of doing business. Firms may "seem good" at the same time they are causing damage to society as a whole; social ac-

counting despite being a difficult process, also has advantages that may exceed their disadvantages.

Legislative changes, the tools provided by Corporate Social Responsibility, Codes of Conduct and instruments such as Global Compact (United Nations, 2002), a global network of firms and organizations trying to create a more stable global market and build shared values and a forum for dialogue and institutional learning, may bring about this social and cultural change, this change in attitudes and values that is a key element for women to obtain greater advantages and greater levels of equality in the globalization process.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A system of producing goods and services for export fulfilling orders of foreign companies. Working conditions are highly precarious: Low wages, poor security and hygiene, long working hours and trade union repression.
- <sup>2</sup> A more comprehensive view of the working conditions in maquilas can be found in: “Las maquilas, un ejemplo de la globalización”, *Cuadernos sobre la Deslocalización y la Organización Mundial del Comercio*, 2002.
- <sup>3</sup> The establishment of maquilas is widespread in countries such as Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Morocco, Bangladesh or India.
- <sup>4</sup> The conventions referred to may be found in “The vision and priorities of the ILO for 2010-2015. Making decent work true”, Geneva: ILO, 2009.
- <sup>5</sup> This information can be seen in: <http://www.solidaridad.net/vernoticia.asp?noticia=610> (checked in March 2010).