

**CHAPTER 5*****Counting women in: globalization, democratization and the women's movement***

*Donna Dickenson*

**Introduction**

Feminism offers the only politics which can transform our world into a more humane place and deal with global issues like equality, development and peace, because it asks the right questions: about power, about the links between the personal and the political; and because it cuts through race and class.

(Antrobus quoted in Bunch and Carillo, 1990, p.73)

This quotation from the Caribbean writer Peggy Antrobus introduces complex relationships between globalization, democratization and the women's movement. These are the concern of this chapter.

The feminist movement may seek democratization on a global scale, according to Antrobus, but women are still hampered by a 'democratic deficit' in terms of economic and political power. Even in the European heartlands of liberal democracy, democratic representation for women has only been fully achieved in the late twentieth century – as late as 1971 in Switzerland. In some parts of the world gains made earlier this century are being lost. Following the 1992 revolution in Afghanistan, for example, women lost their voting rights after a mere 27 years of the suffrage.

Even where they retain democratic rights, women still lack political and economic power, along with access to the sites of power (see Figure 5.1). As of 1993, women still owned only 1 per cent of the world's property (including land) and earned 10 per cent of the globe's income. They constituted a minuscule 4 per cent of heads of state, and 5 per cent of cabinet ministers. Their representation in national legislatures was only marginally better at 10 per cent overall. They held 6 per cent of senior posts in international governmental organizations and 5 per cent of high positions in national policy making (Peterson and Runyan, 1993, p.6). Women have not necessarily benefited from what is conventionally seen as the 'triumph' of liberal democracy and the process of global democratization since 1989 (see Figure 5.2).

But on the other hand, global feminist networks and new expanded forms of (non-territorial) political 'space' *do* appear to be increasing democratic participation for women. This, too, contradicts a conventional hypothesis: that the liberal democratic state's autonomy and political effectiveness are hampered by an increasingly interconnected global system

