

Globalization in Theory and Practice in a Post-Globalization Era

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Political Theory without Borders

Edited by Robert E. Goodin *and* James S. Fishkin

Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2016, 327 pages, \$99.95, ISBN: 9781119110088

Trade, Development and Globalization

By Robert S. Javed Maswood

New York: Routledge, 2014, 185 pages, \$148, ISBN: 9780415826990

Globalization in Practice

Edited by Nigel Thrift, Adam Tickell, Steve Woolgar, *and* William H. Rupp

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, 285 pages, £29.99, ISBN: 9780199212637

Over the years, the term ‘globalization’ has acquired notoriety in all forms of intellectual exchanges in the social sciences and other disciplines. But, its common usage and definitions have ubiquitous references in matters bordering on trade or economic relations among countries of the world. The books under review here offer intellectual renditions on the concept and manifestations of globalization. The books indeed represent the different areas in which globalization has continued to impact humanity across national borders. In its various usages, globalization is depicted as both a cause and effect of the developmental challenges that have engulfed the world since the

end of the second world war– thereby becoming a paradox of some sort in the sense that globalization as a concept possesses the built-in theoretical capacity of being either a dependent or an independent variable, depending on the analytical objective of any given analyst at any given time. Thus, globalization presents a big problem for political theorizing in the sense that as a concept, it can be utilized as an explanatory variable for other phenomena while other phenomena can be utilized to explain globalization.

The problematique of theorizing on issues of global significance engages the attention of Robert E. Goodin and James S. Fishkin in their book, *Politi-*

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cal Theory without Borders. Political theory, as they assert in their book, has focused its analytical beam for too long on internalities—on relations among a people, and on relations between them and those ruling over them, noting that the prescriptions of political theory were traditionally designed for the internal governance of principalities, taken one at a time. The challenging events and incidents in the contemporary world including climate change, pollution by industrial effluents, especially carbon emissions and the threats they pose to humankind have continued to refocus concerns for global action to deter or reverse such untoward developments. This book attempts to present a broad theory encompassing dimensions of the diverse issues of common concerns to humanity across national borders; the authors agreed in their belief that a clearer perspective and deeper understanding of the concept of globalization can emerge from this project.

The book begins with an introductory chapter by Robert E. Goodin and James S. Fishkin and consists of three parts of thirteen chapters. The first part entitled “Global Spillovers” contains three chapters by George E Kennan, Simon Caney and Mathias Risse respectively. The chapter by Kennan discusses the imperative of preventing a world wasteland from the standpoint of a multi-stakeholders approach comprising national, regional and international efforts, with emphasis on the latter and exploring standards for conserving the environment in the face of the ravaging impact of ever-increasing productive ex-

ploitation of natural resources in substantial parts of the world (pp. 8-17). Simon Caney’s chapter on “Two Kinds of Climate Justice” examines the ethical challenges of climate change from two different prisms, namely ‘burden-sharing justice and harm avoidance justice.’ While laying a premium on the perspective of harm avoidance justice, Caney observes the need for making necessary sacrifices to avert dangerous climate change by the application of relevant principles such as the power/ responsibility principle and the polluter pays principle (pp. 18-45). Risse’s chapter on “The Human Right to Water and Common Ownership of the Earth” broaches issues of managing water in the context of the theory of global justice, stressing the importance of having a global water compact for regulating the distribution of water (pp. 46-73).

The second part of the book entitled “Global Flows” consists of five chapters on varying issues of global significance including tax competition, human rights, and migration and citizenship, among others. The chapter by Peter Dietsch and Thomas Rixen examines the question of global background justice against the backdrop of the prevalent tax competition among sovereign States. They observe that aside from putting pressure on national fiscal regimes, tax competition has the tendency to exacerbate inequalities of income and wealth both within countries and across borders. They emphasize the need for close examination of the rules of international taxation to ensure that they do not contain any unjust bias while stress-

ing the importance of creating an International Taxation Organization which would adjudicate disputes between states on compliance issues (pp. 77-106). Christian Barry's "Sovereign Debt, Human Rights, and Policy Conditionality" is an inquiry into whether or not human rights conditionality or any other conditionality arrangements could be seen as a justifiable requirement for debt relief. With an array of facts for and against conditionality arrangements for debt relief, Barry's balanced thesis offers an open-ended perspective on the subject. (pp. 107-132)

The chapter by Allen Buchanan, Tony Cole and Robert O. Keohane raises concern about the apparent monopolization of patents of technological innovations by certain individuals from certain regions of the world to the disadvantage of a great number of people from a multiplicity of other regions, a development which they view as not only an inhibition to the diffusion of innovation to other parts of the world but also antithetical to the principles of justice in the diffusion of innovation. They reason that because the diffusion of innovation is being blocked by the features of dominant institutions which makes the problem an institutional one, an institutional solution has become necessary, for instance establishing a Global Institute for Justice in Innovation (GIJI). The GIJI, they suggest, would offer prizes and other incentives for innovations and promote the diffusion of existing justice-impacting innovations through a multi-step process (pp. 133-161). Claus Offe's chapter on migration regimes of the European Union and

its member states presents a very detailed analysis of the issues which predispose citizens from the poor countries of the global south to migrate to the rich countries of the global north. He notes that the migration regimes of the EU and its member states as currently designed, lack requisite normative standards that could promote global justice because they are bereft of procedural fairness, non-discriminatory provision of the labor market and educational opportunities for migrants, among other limitations (pp. 162-205). The opportunism of states receiving migrants is vividly exposed in the chapter by Ayelet Shachar and Ran Hirschl, in which they argue that today's global knowledge economy is compelling states to attract only those migrants who would shore up their human capital reserve. The global race for talent among advanced countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Portugal and Malta, they aver, has taken the form of recruiting those with extraordinary skills and achievements in sciences, arts, or sports from developing or underdeveloped countries. Selective migration regimes, the authors believe, have inflicted many wounds over the past decades to the ideal of equal citizenship (pp. 206-233).

The third part of the book entitled "Global Interventions" has four chapters. The chapter by Catherine Lu examines the injustices of colonialism using the structural approach. Lu argues that the international society of states through its rules, customs and practices bears some historical responsibility for the unjust interna-

tional social structures that enable wrongdoing (pp. 237-259). The chapter by Clifford Geertz is a treatise on how the new states that emerged from colonial rule and their regimes were assessed by western scholars on the basis of western values. He identifies the three characteristics of the new states as nationalism, autocracy, and modernization in that sequence. These characteristics, he observes, are indicative of the different historical epochs of the post-colonial new states, noting that at these different points, the new states and their leaders had to face the tyranny of western ideals through which they were serially assessed (pp. 260-274). Gareth Evans' chapter is a discourse on the transition from humanitarian intervention by the international community in situations of catastrophic human rights violations within states toward the embrace of a new concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P). He identifies some of the problems that have arisen from this transition and which have been militating against the efficacy of the principle of the responsibility to protect. These include lack of requisite political will, lack of capacity, and the unwillingness of the Security Council to buy-into the R2P package which includes the use of military force when necessary (pp. 275-292). Jennifer C. Rubenstein's chapter argues that international Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) have exercised and continue to exercise quasi-governmental power through their advocacy as non-electoral representation. Using the INGO-Oxfam as a case study, she affirms the need for a re-conceptualization of the influence that INGOs

wield outside the lens of democratic representation and instead through the lens of power (pp. 293-321).

A careful assessment of the collection of essays by Robert E. Goodin and James S. Fishkin shows that the authors' desire to broaden the horizon and frontiers of political theorizing to encompass issues that have international import and that touch directly on subsisting global situations has achieved a measure of success. However, this edited volume cannot lay claim to having provided the global community of intellectuals an all-encompassing theory on globalization. Indeed, no one publication can revel in the euphoria of totalistic theorizing on any subject in the social sciences, all the more so with regard to a multi-dimensional concept with an interdisciplinary slant like globalization. Moreover in all the analyses of the different issues in the book, the imperative to enforce global rules to give order to the 'order-less' character of the prevailing world system was not broached despite the palpable necessity of reinvigorating all the post-second world war international institutions as a way of establishing a fair and just order which is the ardent need of our contemporary world.

Trade, Development and Globalization focuses on the economic dimension of globalization from the standpoint of trade relations between developed and developing countries within the context of the extant global trade architecture which came into being at the end of the Second World War. This concise publication has two parts.

Part I comprises four chapters which analyze the relative marginalization of developing countries from the trade system structured around the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and their attempts to renegotiate the rules. Part II consists of two chapters on the impact of globalization on developing countries. After a thorough examination of the place of developing countries in the series of multilateral trade negotiations that culminated in the enactment of subsisting global trade rules, Javed Maswood avers that the trade rules were skewed in favor of the developed countries. He argues that even though new opportunities for the export of intermediate goods by developing countries were created by globalization, the existing trade rules continue to inhibit developing countries' chances of benefiting from the process. Where for instance UNCTAD made an attempt to introduce measures to assist developing countries, such initiatives, the author argues, did not alter in any significant way the fundamental inequities in the system, hence the prevailing condition of trade asymmetry.

For Maswood, globalization is not a magical godsend that will miraculously transport all countries out of backwardness, and globalization will not lead to any meaningful development in developing countries because of political failure and corruption which the elites in developing countries perpetrate. According to him, no combination of strategies will guarantee development, in the absence at least of good governance" (p. 158).

Trade, Development and Globalization is a lurid depiction of the inequality of opportunities that globalization spawns. It is a portrayal of the structural deficiencies in the world's extant trade architecture, which the powerful west and their allies continue to foist on the underdeveloped countries of Africa and Asia. However, Maswood is careful not to put the whole blame on the developed countries for the seeming inalterability of the palpable unequal exchange in trade relations between developed and underdeveloped countries; he points out the culpability of the political elites of the underdeveloped countries in the whole saga as well. Until good governance is instituted in the underdeveloped countries of Africa and Asia, he stresses, they will not experience salvation from the impoverishing forces of globalization and world trade, and hence their underdevelopment will persist.

Maswood's perspective on globalization and trade is limited to the extent that it focuses exclusively on the economic dimension of the concept. The socio-political and cultural perspectives on the concept and phenomenon of globalization are not given any scant consideration. The rise of ultra nationalism and trade protectionism across countries of the world, especially in Europe and America contradict the theme and contents of Maswood's thesis.

Giving a vivid account of the diverse mundane manifestations and dimensions of globalization, Nigel Thrift *et al.* (eds.) in their book entitled 'Globalization in Practice'—argue that a better

understanding of globalization could be achieved when all the formations and everyday infrastructures, i.e all the little things that keep the forces of globalization active are understood. This book provides a unique perspective on globalization as an essential part of everyday human existence in our modern and highly integrated world. By digging into several facets of the everyday life of capitalism in fifty-one chapters covering, among others issues, travel, tourism and mobility; infrastructure and transport; finance and business; media, consumption and leisure; health and nature; order and control; the authors' intention is to present a more comprehensive, realistic and empirical theory with a tinge of practicality. Such ordinary things like bananas, barcodes, containers, urine sales, bureau de change, the game of rounders, news services, and CCTV, etc are carefully analyzed to show their usefulness beyond the confines of ordinary perception of their worth.

Nigel Thrift and his colleagues make a worthy attempt to complement the volume by Goodin and Fishkin by providing an uncommon perspective on globalization which undoubtedly enriches the intellectual community by offering an empirical and realistic theory of globalization from the standpoint of its diverse ordinary manifestations across countries of the world. However, these two publications do not point out the spatial differentiation of the impacts of globalization which the economic analyses in Maswood's book convincingly demonstrate. But of greater impor-

tance in this whole episode is to assess the currency and theoretical relevance of these books against the backdrop of recent political developments in the United Kingdom and the United States. The 'Brexit and Amerixit' are a clear statement of the intent of these two countries, both icons of global capitalism, to constrict the frontiers of globalization in an emerging epoch which could be described as a post-globalization era¹. Brexit represents the decision of the UK to exit the European Union consequent upon the outcome of a referendum conducted on June 23, 2016 to determine the status of the UK in the EU. Amerixit is a catch-phrase to describe the outcome of the Presidential election in the United States in which Donald J Trump whose worldview is opposed to trade liberalization and globalization, emerged the victor of the country's electoral system. There seems to be a unanimity of opinion that the "America First" mantra of President Trump exemplified in the series of Executive Orders that he signed within few days of his inauguration as the President, points to the obvious fact that the United States under the Trump Administration may have concluded plans to exit its global leadership role. Why would the U.S and UK, the global symbols of capitalism and promoters of its global essence, take political decisions that smack of a resurgence of ultra-nationalism in their enclaves? Is globalization failing its erstwhile advocates as much as it has failed the underdeveloped countries of the world? If what is currently playing out in the United States and United Kingdom is any guide, the

world has entered a new realm in the evolving history of the human race.

Theorizing on Post-Globalization Era: Will Globalization End?

Whilst the three books under review here offer helpful descriptions of the processes surrounding globalization and their effects across national boundaries, they however gave no consideration to the prospects of the big global powers (e.g. UK and U.S.) which are often portrayed as beneficiaries of globalization taking steps to constrict its frontiers. With the Brexit and Amerixit, obviously, the United Kingdom and the United States have indicated a strong desire to take a back seat in the globalization process, and the risk in this trend is that other countries could take their cue from these receding big global powers. The ultimate outcome of this dangerous development is what Ian Bremmer describes in *Every Nation for Itself: Winners and Losers in a G-Zero World* (2012). Bremmer observes the shrinking power gap between countries, the absence of a Leviathan in a global system in which global institutions are wobbling and the conundrum that many countries are strong enough to prevent the international community from taking action, but that none has the political or economic muscle to remake the status quo. In this circumstance, Bremmer asserts, “no one is driving the bus.”²

Bremmer could be right that the presence of multiple alternatives to American power as evident in the G-7 and

G-20 arrangements means that no one is in charge of world affairs. The last eight years of the Obama Administration during which America led from behind other powers, is a testament of America’s realization that other countries have attained some remarkable levels of political power in global politics. Indeed, the Obama years set the stage for America’s current transition to diplomatic isolationism, which President Trump’s era heralds. No doubt, the exit of America from global leadership could reverse the gains of globalization because international trade could be hampered by the consequential rise of ultra-nationalism and chauvinism across the world in reaction to the planned erection of walls across American borders and the imposition of stricter immigration rules which the Trump’s era portends. And in the absence of trade liberalization, which was one of the triggers of globalization, economic interactions and exchanges among countries of the world could be severely reduced with the implication of heightening distrust and hostility that could degenerate into interminable wars among feuding nations. Any constraints to free trade among countries will surely serve as a catalyst for dispute and international conflict. The world will be unsafe to live in if there is no ‘big power’ to give direction and guidance to the global community and to regulate the conduct of states through the application of relevant sanctions and to use force to deter the misbehavior of wrongdoers when necessary.

Although the exit of America from global leadership could affect the

globalization project as it relates to the economic aspects of the process for some time, in due course, other powers—non-western powers could emerge to give direction and leadership to the global community because nature abhors a vacuum. China is already flexing economic muscles with its rising profile as the second largest economy in the world and a huge investment portfolio in several countries. India, Brazil, Russia, Germany, South Africa and Japan are doing very well. In any case, the aspects of globalization which Goodin and Fishkin theorize in their book cannot be circumscribed or confined within the borders of any country, regardless of whether or not there is a global leader in charge of world affairs. Climate change and its effects, flooding, pollution, desertification, infestations by locusts and wild birds, among other phenomena within a given ecosystem, cannot be strictly localized because of their global essence. This shows the need to keep looking for explanations for all those processes and products that connect humanity at different points of their interactions and exchanges. If researchers, political scientists or international relations scholars, were to hold this as an objective, we would help broaden and deepen general understanding and appreciation of globalization beyond the mercantilist perception of the phenomenon, which focuses mainly on the nature of economic exchanges among countries.

In conclusion, the three texts show by their very different perspectives and

foci that globalization cannot be reduced to one thing or definition just as Barrie Axford's book on *Theories of Globalization* convincingly expresses.³ It is when we can systematically relate the theory to the practice of globalization across countries of the world that a fuller grasp of the enormity of the process can be appreciated. Globalization, as shown earlier, is both an explanatory variable in regard to the changes that have taken place in the world since the end of the WWII and a dependent variable, being also a process to be explained by other variables. Regardless of the shortcomings of the three books, which include their inability to explain why the perceived beneficiaries of globalization seem to be wary of it, the books have shown the diverse dimensions of globalization, and how difficult it is for one country to dominate in all facets of its manifestations, thereby strengthening the understanding of the interconnectedness of countries. Globalization may be facing some challenges but definitely, it cannot be reversed without repercussions for the well-being of the world. ■

Endnotes

1. Brexit represents a growing resentment of the UK citizens towards immigrants which culminated in their decision to exit EU through the referendum held on June 23, 2016.
2. Devin Stewart, [Review of the book *In A G-Zero World, It's Every Nation For Itself*, by Ian Bremmer], *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, (May 16, 2012).
3. Yves Laberge, [Review of the book *Theories of Globalization*, by Barrie Axford], *Political Studies Review*, (September 13, 2016).