

James H. Mittelman, *Whither Globalization? The Vortex of Knowledge and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 2004).

5 Ideologies and the globalization agenda

If ideology is a way of looking at the world that justifies or undermines an existing order, then contemporary globalization must be viewed from different points on the hierarchies of power and privilege.¹ For those who hold power and possess wealth, globalization is an *ideology of freedom* for expanding not only the world's bounty but also human potential. At the other end of the power hierarchy, globalization is experienced as an *ideology of domination*, widening the divisions among humankind.

To varying degrees, these perspectives embrace a common element: a recognition of a dynamic of inclusion and exclusion. For example, James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, presents a vision shared by diverse observers who are rethinking the core ideas of globalization: '[O]ur challenge is to make globalization an instrument of opportunity and inclusion' (as quoted in Pfaff 2000). However, there is a tension between maintaining the dominant ideology and constructing counterideologies of globalization. Each current of ideology sets a different agenda – a broad program, not a detailed blueprint – for future world order. The objectives in this chapter are to identify these ideological clusters, delimit their varied globalization agendas, and critically evaluate them. It will be shown that complex ideologies of globalization are being reworked to fit a changing world order.

Approach

This chapter offers close textual analysis but does not explore the extent to which the evolved ideology and emergent counterideologies are actually embraced by the public in different contexts. Gauging latent ideologies of globalization requires empirical research – polling, interviewing, and surveys – and is the subject of the next chapter. In contrast, the emphasis here is on the transcripts of intellectual innovators. The focus is on ideological leadership in the sense that select ideas generated by intellectual visionaries are embodied in powerful institutions and transmitted through policy instruments. The ideas selected are never freestanding, but intimately related to political and material interests. When the outcome is an assertion of ideological hegemony, certain ideas become centerpieces of consensus, and consensus is more cost-effective than coercion.

The ideas infused in globalizing processes thus inform the exercise of power. Thought and action – theory and practice – are bound together so as to constrain and facilitate the possibilities for a social transformation. That said, ideological analysis helps to decipher codes of domination, identify the fault lines of power, and disclose efforts to form representations of counterpower. An ideological approach is useful insofar as it offers insight into the contested agendas for globalization.

As indicated, there is no monolithic doctrine of globalization. Uncertainties abound, there are ambiguities within ambiguities, and domination exists within domination. The consensual aspects, the ideological tonic, of hegemony are uneven, in flux, and in need of constant maintenance. With contemporary globalization, organic intellectuals not only produce new ideas but also make or challenge policy. In fact, intellectual participants in this process are linked in myriad formal and informal networks. These arrangements have a material dimension and may facilitate a broad, albeit uneven, consensus (Cox, R. W. 1979, 1996). Thus, in their respective and sometimes intersecting networks, organic intellectuals are not univocal but share basic values.

Within this range, a main axis is between the ideas framed at the center in North America and Europe and those at the margins. A heuristic that facilitates the examination of fluid blends, not a dichotomy, this distinction is only partly place-based and may be grasped in terms of the social relations of power. There are varied axes within the center and at the margins. While making allowance for these entanglements, it is clear that the views of globalization from the top substantially differ from the outlooks at the bottom. The late Claude Ake, one of Africa's leading intellectuals, presented a perspective from below: 'Marginalization is in reality the dynamics of globalization' (1996: 114). Indeed, the ideological thrust of globalization is begetting counterthrusts, albeit in embryonic forms. To explore these tendencies, I will first examine the core ideas embedded in the dynamics of neoliberal globalization and the extent to which they are implicated in public discourses.

The core ideas

Contemporary globalization is about neoliberalism, defined in Chapter 1 as both heightened integration in the world economy and a standard policy framework. As the *Financial Times* put it: '[Neoliberal globalisation is merely the free market system on an international scale]. Further, 'the key is competition. . . . [Neoliberal globalisation] remains perhaps the most effective tool we have to make the world not just more prosperous, but also a freer and more peaceful place' (Paulson 2001). In another formulation, Gilpin weighs the views of the proponents of a neoliberal world economy and their critics who fear the consequences of market domination, and advances his own position: 'American political and security interests as well as economic interests are served by a united world economy' (2000: 348).

Rooted in classical political economy, neoliberalism may be traced to Adam Smith and others in this tradition. In the twentieth century, the free-market

theories pioneered by philosopher-economist Friedrich von Hayek and his colleagues, including Milton Friedman, at the University of Chicago provided the intellectual underpinnings for the radical agendas of Thatcher and Reagan. These political leaders propagated neoliberal values, engineered the ideological shift from national Keynesianism to neoliberal globalization, and presented neoliberalism as the generator of material well-being and rising productivity as the solution to social ills. They emphasized opening the market, not protecting society. Since the public sector does not compete for profits or market share, its scope, especially social spending, had to be reduced. To institute neoliberal ideas, there emerged the bedrock framework of deregulation, liberalization, and privatization.

A set of organizing institutions bundles neoliberalism and globalization, and seeks to universalize the core ideas. Among these diverse institutions are the media, the lecture circuit, schools, and universities, with business faculties being key to developing and disseminating neoliberal ideas. MBA programs serve as vital mechanisms in the transnational spread of a distinctive combination of values and hence for the emergence of a common ideological framework among policy-makers in several countries. Indeed, many MBA-toting ministers and senior bureaucrats around the world have been trained in neoclassical economics at leading universities in the US.

Also important in promoting a single dominant way of thinking about the world are bilateral and multilateral agencies, especially the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF. Testimony to the interests served by international financial institutions is provided by Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to former President Jimmy Carter:

[O]ne must consider as part of the American system of the global web of specialized organizations, especially the 'international' financial institutions. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank can be said to represent 'global' interests, and their constituency may be construed as the world. In reality, however, they are heavily American dominated and their origins are traceable to American initiative, particularly the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944.

(Brzezinski 1997: 27)

Brzezinski adds that 'global cooperation institutions', i.e. the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF, have established abroad major features of 'American supremacy' (1997: 28). Through policy mechanisms such as structural adjustment programs, international institutions have implemented the free-trade model and helped forge the 'Washington consensus', a framework for re-organizing economies and societies around neoliberal principles.

An initial incongruity in this ideology was the ascendance of state-led economies in Asia that did not adopt the path prescribed by neoliberal enthusiasts. Other anomalies, which appeared in rapid succession, were the debacle of 'shock therapy' market reforms in the former Soviet Union and parts of Eastern Europe, spectacularly the 1997–8 Asian economic crisis in which IMF advice contributed

to the descending spiral, and the 2001 Argentine collapse wherein the neoliberal formula clearly accelerated the downturn. The cumulative impact of these experiences meant a loss of confidence in the 'Washington consensus'.

There have been various attempts to refurbish this consensus, such as the 2002 United Nations Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico. Toward this end, a complex of research institutions and think tanks in Washington, DC, seek to advance discourses about public policy. The mission of these groups is to bridge public education and policy formulation. Also, leading public intellectuals who offer policy advice are propellants for new currents of ideological discourse.²

Ideological discourse

Let us now analyze exemplars of different sets of ideas and values about maintaining or undermining neoliberal globalization. Of course, no single exemplar completely typifies an approach, but the ones scrutinized below, to varying degrees, capture key features. The focus here is on four ideological currents: the centrist neoliberal school itself; leading criticism internal to this school – what may be called reformist neoliberal institutionalism; historical-materialist transformism; and development transformism. Although there are significant debates within each of these clusters, shared ideas are evident. The books considered in this chapter do not exhaust the range of possible ideologies and counterideologies.³ My major concern is the ways in which these exemplar works frame agendas for globalization and alterglobalization.

1 *Centrist neoliberal thinking* is reflected in a World Bank Policy Research Report titled *Globalization, Growth, and Poverty: Building an Inclusive World Economy* (2000), a team project prepared under the supervision of Nicholas Stern, chief economist and senior vice president at the bank. In this study, the point of departure is that globalization corresponds to increasing integration of economies and societies throughout the world. The main contention is that in most cases, globalization reduces poverty and lessens inequality among countries though, on average, not necessarily within countries. The report emphasizes that globalization produces winners and losers within each society.

To sustain its arguments, this research demarcates three waves of globalization: 1870 to 1914, a period characterized by increasing cross-border flows – a time when globalization seemed 'inevitable'; 1950–80, years marked by greater integration among rich countries; and 1980 to the present, an age of rapid technological advance and a shift of manufactures to developing countries. With the third wave, 'the new globalizers' – also termed 'successful globalizers' – are beginning to catch up, and the less globalized still face rising poverty. The report, rightly in my view, notes that there is no single model of success, thereby recognizing that the policy agendas must be custom-fitted. Disavowing nationalism and protectionism, the World Bank forthrightly states: '[T]here are no anti-global victories to report for the postwar Third World. We infer that this is because freer trade stimulates growth in Third World economies . . .' (2000: 37).

Following a series of chapters that focuses on economic phenomena, a penultimate chapter bracketing 'Power, Culture, and Environment' is inserted. There is discussion of 'the global institutional architecture' and the assertion that 'governments have many degrees of freedom to manage the interaction between trade, capital, and labor flows, on the one hand, and national culture and environment, on the other' (2000: 142). Not surprisingly, the prescriptions – the bank's agenda for globalization – give directions for improved market access.

On balance, this study signals a shift from the old orthodoxy. Among the important revisions in neoliberal thinking is a frank recognition of persistent marginalization concomitant to globalization, though, for the bank, marginalization is a descriptive statistical category, not a dynamic concept that turns on competing social forces. There is also acknowledgment that the state can provide elements of social protection; it may play an enabling role, as in the world's two most populous countries, China and India, both of which, in different ways, have sustained large-scale economic growth.

However, the premises of this report are open to challenge. In terms of historiography, are the first two waves really globalization? Or should they be construed as pre-globalization? If globalization is tantamount to world history, why employ the concept of globalization at all, and are the World Bank researchers trivializing it? Certainly the noneconomic relationships differ from one period to another (as from colonial rule to the postcolonial order).

While revisionist, is this neoliberal thinking resurrecting discredited modernization theories? In an era of globalization, to what degree is there autonomy for national policymakers, as the modernization thinkers posited? Further, do the neoclassical authors of this study regard the state as an invariant entity from 1870 to the present? More basically, is their basic supposition – globalization may be unidimensionally understood as economic integration – facile?

In light of the material infrastructure of their network, regular access to the world's leading political authorities, and the insinuation of ideas in the exercise of power, there can be little doubt that the 2000 World Bank Report is an important statement – one with great influence. It offers insight into corrections in the lens used by policymakers at the epicenter of globalization.

2 *Reformist neoliberals* take issue with centrist ideas and powerful institutions that convey them. These policy intellectuals participate in multiple networks: the lecture circuit, which goes along with quasi-celebrity status; the media industry; venues such as the WEF, where they interact with the top members of the corporate and political establishment; and research institutes at some of the world's highly endowed universities, which afford material support and are largely US-based. Noteworthy, however, is that a handful of leading economists, technically sophisticated masters of the neoclassical trade though not uniform in their views, such as Joseph Stiglitz, Dani Rodrik, Paul Krugman, and Jeffrey Sachs, have dissented from aspects of orthodox neoliberal globalization. Some of them collaborate in Stiglitz's Initiative for Policy Dialogue, a global network of social scientists established in 2000. Drawing together select experts from around the