

Global Shift: Reshaping the Global Economic Map in the 21st Century, 4th edition Peter Dicken, 2003; London: Sage Publications Ltd. ISBN 0-7619-7149-1 & 0-7619-7150-5 Price £26.99 (paperback) pages 656

The popular textbook *Global Shift* by Peter Dicken has reached its 4th edition. Comparing the latest edition with previous ones, I feel that the core explanatory chapters in the book have gained in accessibility and clarity, due to extensive revision and updating of tables and figures. The central message expressed in these chapters has not changed: economic globalisation arises from the dynamic interplay between transnational corporations (TNCs) as prime actors and nation states as regulators, facilitated by processes of technological change (p. 4).

The industry case studies have also undergone the required updates, and provide a sufficient level of in-depth analysis of selected industries. Furthermore, an entire new chapter has been added, devoted to the analysis of developments in distribution industries, in particular global logistics and transnational retailing, within the context of globalisation. This additional chapter on distribution industries is an important asset of the latest edition, as these industries tend to remain unaddressed in current mainstream debates on globalisation in the world economy.

Finally, the concluding part of the book addresses the difficult question of who gains and loses under processes of globalisation. In comparison to the previous edition, this part has been enlarged considerably, now serving better as a complete part in the book. Separate chapters address central problems for developed and developing countries, both in terms of job creation and income levels, and put these issues in the context of globalisation. Furthermore, the concluding chapter addresses general global governance issues in the present world economy, and discusses specifically the issues of international labour standards and environmental regulation.

The strong points of this edition are in line with the status of the book earned by the previous editions. Dicken addresses a range of topics in a clear and concise manner, using theories and empirical evidence from a variety of disciplines. Furthermore, he discusses complex processes and interactions in a way that incites the interest of both experienced and inexperienced readers of economic geography. The use of tables and figures is excellent, and the summaries at the end of each chapter are useful aids, re-emphasising the main points. Also, the references are extensive and by and large inclusive. Therefore, in its present format, the book is perfectly suited for undergraduate geography and non-geography students, as well as non-geography master students in international business and regional planning.

However, having read the book through the eyes of an economic geographer, I believe that the book in its present form suffers from two related weaknesses. First, there is a danger that *Global Shift* is becoming a victim of its own success. The multi-disciplinary approach and the large variety of sub-topics have made the book accessible to students from a variety of backgrounds. However, this also means that some topics do not receive sufficient attention and hence remain under explored. The best example of this is the limited section in the book devoted to geographical localisation or clustering of economic activities. This topic has recently generated a large amount of theoretical and empirical research within the broad fields of economic geography and international economics. Globalisation is creating a growing level of interconnectedness and competition in the world economy, and geographical clustering of activity is an important way in which firms and localities deal with these pressures. Although the importance of geographical clusters is acknowledged in *Global Shift*, given the importance and the large body of contemporary research, I feel that it should have received more attention and a more central place in the book.

Second, the direct conceptual link between the first three parts of the book, which deal with describing and analysing processes of globalisation, and the last part that addresses the winners and losers in the contemporary world economy, is not entirely clear. This is not to say that I disagree with the relevance of the latter topic in the book (or in any discussion of

globalisation for that matter), far from it. However, the consistency of the analysis in the previous chapters, in the form of considering the roles of TNCs, states, technology and geography, is not maintained in the last part of the book. This part is of a more descriptive and normative nature, and does not make sufficiently clear how the factors identified in the earlier parts of the book contribute to the present existence of large differences between winners and losers.

A good example of this is the chapter on developing countries (chapter 17). This chapter gives a good overview of the major problems that developing countries are facing nowadays. Also, it contains some indications as to how these issues may be related to globalisation. However, the chapter does not sufficiently address the direct roles of TNCs, states and technology in these matters. In one of the previous chapters (chapter 9), Dicken discusses a wide range of possible effects that may arise from the presence of TNCs in a host economy. The chapter addressing problems facing developing countries would have been a perfect setting to show how TNCs are contributing to these problems and how their positive contributions may be limited in such settings.

In my opinion, there are two alternative ways in which the missing conceptual link between the last part of the book and the preceding ones can be improved. One straightforward way is to follow, as best as possible, a similar approach as adopted in the industry case studies, where the roles of technology, TNCs and states are systematically analysed. This may result in a more limited coverage of the final chapters, but would clarify the influence of the central factors significantly. Alternatively, and this is my favoured option, the latter chapters would benefit from a change in angle, by analysing the persistent existence of losing parties under processes of globalisation from a locality point of view.

One of the main messages of the book is that global changes are manifested most directly at the local level. To highlight this aspect, it could be beneficial to take localities as the geographical scale of analysis in the final part of the book, analyse how globalisation affects these localities in terms of income and employment, and then consider what localities can do to influence these effects of globalisation. Again, such an approach would perhaps result in a more narrow coverage of the topics compared to the present content, but would strengthen the economic geography aspect of the analysis greatly. Also, this approach would connect with the growing interest in local economic development issues reflected in geography, cities and planning courses in universities nowadays.

In sum, I think that the 4th edition of *Global Shift* will be perceived as an improvement compared to the 3rd edition. It is ideally suited as a core textbook for undergraduate studies in geography, business studies and regional planning and will be on numerous reading lists of university-courses around the world. In fact, at present I cannot think of another book that, for its intended audience, links the topics of globalisation and economic geography in such a clear and encompassing manner. Having said so, I do believe that the economic geography content of the last part of the book could and should be strengthened.

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