

Review: Global Ordering: Institutions and Autonomy in a Changing World

Louis W. Pauly and William D. Coleman (Eds.)

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This is only one of a remarkable sequence of books and other publications which appear from the Canadian Major Collaborative Research Initiative on Globalization and Autonomy. Those involved also maintain a remarkable collective publication in the *Globalization and Autonomy Online Compendium* (<http://www.globalautonomy.ca>). This provides a dynamic overview of the total initiative and at the same time serves an integrative role for scholars both inside and outside of the Initiative.

This volume comprises a series of studies each reviewing the impacts of globalization from a significant perspective. The authors set out to be truly multi-disciplinary but have developed a remarkably holistic perspective which might even be described as “beyond disciplinarity.” Of course, the very idea of holism has a long history of rejection, even though long sequences of scholars have struggled to think holistically in order to understand whole systems. In coining the very word holism, Smuts argued that wholes are reality, while the parts are abstract analytical tools used by scholars.

In itself, the processes of globalization together constitute a whole, and the Canadian team demonstrates considerable intellectual courage in developing holistic understandings. This volume ranges over and describes relationships across the United Nations, international law, agriculture, whaling, World Heritage, trade, governance, religion, social policies, sovereignty, subsidiarity and polar politics. Certainly, their global thinking can only be strategically understood as a whole based in reality.

The cover description states simply that the book “explores key institutional fault lines between the tectonic plates of globalization and the insistent demands for individual and collective autonomy. Despite myriad global forces influencing the lives of individuals, societies and polities, people continue to value their personal and communal independence. . . . At the same time, many formal and informal institutions . . . are evolving, adapting to meet new challenges, or failing to adjust rapidly enough.”

The result is a fascinating and dynamic story of the exploratory process. Most of the authors capture truly complex processes in clear, competent, professional writing. It is nevertheless not simplified or dumbed down, but helps the reader to understand the reality underlying the exploratory journeys.

I often judge a book by assessing how well it deals with the specific topic in which I have most experience and understanding, so I gave my closest attention to the chapter on the World Heritage Convention. That chapter is an unparalleled picture of the challenges and responses underlying the more than 50 years of evolution of the World Heritage Movement.

I conclude with a sincere respect for the achievements of the Initiative, hence congratulations to the responsible scholars and the strongest recommendation that any persons seeking to understand globalization and its myriad inter-relations should purchase this very fine book.

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