

# "the globalization paradox: democracy and the future of the world economy" by rod...

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



The book focuses on the globalization trends and the competing interests of nationalism and internationalism. The author of this book gives a chronological account of the globalization trend, from West Europe to East Europe, North America, India, and then China. The author presents his argument in historical approach other than from an economic perspective. The book talks about the role of Imperial leadership in England and France in promoting international trade.

To them, this was one way of spreading political powers to the untapped parts of the world such as India, China, parts of North America, and finally to Africa. The author notes that through companies such as The Age of Chartered Trading Companies, King Charles II was able to spread his sphere of influence to India and China.

These companies and the leadership in England and France had mutual benefit in their agreements. The companies benefited economically while the two countries managed to spread their territorial borders in the international community. In this paper, the researcher will conduct a critical review of this book.

This book is very important in explaining the chronological events of globalization, from the ancient times to the current day where technology plays a very important role in international relations. Globalization is now a reality, thanks to the emerging technologies. This book may help in explaining some of the events that are currently witnessed in various parts of the world.

Russia recently annexed Crimea from Ukraine at a time the international society believed that this region was poised to have a relatively stable political environment. This is the same thing that happened a few centuries ago when world powers such as Great Britain and France scrambled for Africa and Asia to spread their sphere of influence.

Reading this book, one is able to understand why Russia considers such a small region so important that it risks its political and economic relationships with the international community. Currently, China has a very dangerous territorial dispute with Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, and many other nations around this region over the South China Sea (Stone, 2015). Interestingly, the United States has been drawn into this conflict as it supports regional allies against what they consider as an aggression from China.

This is one of the aspects of paradox that the author of this book is talking about. This book explains the greed that individual countries had when they were struggling to control the world. History now seems to repeat itself if the events in East Europe and South East Asia are anything to go by. The interest then and now is still the same, the need to gain political millage.

According to Rodrik (2007), some scholars argue that dictatorship is the greatest threat to globalization. These scholars believe that countries which had authoritarian rulers such as Russia, Libya, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea posed a big threat to globalization. However, some of these countries such as Russia, Libya, and Iraq have now embraced democracy. However, this has not changed the relationship they had with the West.

A country such as Russia has embraced democracy. However, the relationship with the West is still as bad as it was during the Cold War. In fact, President Vladimir Putin is making some decisions that are detrimental to the globalization spirit to gain political mileage, such as annexing Crimea from Ukraine (Ravenhill, 2015).

Since the annexation, President Putin has become very popular in Russia. In this case, Democracy is becoming a tool that rulers use to harm the weaker nations. This book explores similar issues that took place during the era of King Charles II. Understanding the events presented in this book, explaining the current events in East Europe, and South East Asia becomes simple. That is why the researcher considered it very critical and informative for this course.

This book has twelve chapters, with each focusing on various aspects of globalization and how democracy and economic factors affect it. Chapter 1 of this book focuses on the history of globalization, from as early as 17th C. According to the author, it all started when King Charles II gave English and Dutch companies complete monopolistic rights to trade in foreign countries. Rodrik (2011) says, " English East India Company's monopoly covered trade with Indian subcontinent and China" (p. 8).

They expanded to parts of India and parts of China. Their government gave them the mandate to rule over these countries as a way of enabling them to trade properly. They relied on the raw materials and forced labor in these foreign markets. This was the first step towards globalization. The royal

rulers in Europe had the unilateral rights to determine the sphere of influence for each company. These governments licensed these companies and kept monitoring their operations overseas.

When necessary, the colonial rulers had to send military personnel to support these companies in the foreign lands. The author notes that these companies followed the policies of their parent countries to guide their operations. Rodrik (2011) says, " On November 17, 1671, the regulators at Garraway's coffee house, a popular handout for London ship owners... were greeted with an unusual announcement" (p. 3).

These announcements about changes in policy issues were common at this time and the companies had to follow them at all times. Some of the policies were a reflection of bilateral or multilateral agreements among the major powers on how to govern the newly found territories.

Chapter 2 focuses on the emergence and decline of what the author refers to as first generation globalization in the 19th century. During this period, capital became more liquidated, labor more mobile, and the costs of transaction decreased.

The ease of conducting trade internationally ushered a new era of globalization. According to the author, three major factors contributed to the emergence of this era. Technological advancements that aided transport, reduction of international trade barriers, and the gold standard all played a major role in introducing this new era.

Chapter 3 focuses on the issue of free trade between countries. The author argues that some nations have focused on narrowed interests and embraced obscurantism as they seek selfish interests. Issues such as political failure and protectionism have been seen to hinder free trade among nations. Whereas technological inventions in the fields of transport and communication have made international trade simpler, lack of political goodwill is still affecting globalization negatively.

Chapter 4 looks at how the global politics affect global trade. Bodies such as GATT and WTO were meant to promote global trade and help advance economic growth of the developing countries. However, major world powers such as the United States are now using these global economic bodies as political tools to achieve personal interests. WTO has largely promoted the interest of the West at the expense of the developing nations.

Chapter 9 focuses on political trilemma where countries all over the world struggle to balance democracy, economic globalization, and national interests.

The author notes that these three forces are sometimes in contradiction. It is not easy to achieve global interests in an area where nationalism is very strong. In the final chapter, the author emphasizes on the need for sanity as we try to embrace globalization. He notes that cases where economic crisis in countries such as the United States affects the global society should be reduced.

This book is unique in the way it presents the information about globalization paradox. The topic of the book gives the impression that it is suitable for political science students who may be interested in understanding the dynamics of globalization. However, the synopsis given at the back of the book changes this perception, and it brings in the idea that the book is meant for business and economics students. As one starts to read the book, then everything is changed.

The manner in which the author presents the information is entirely unique. Rodrik (2011) says, " I hear the people inland love dried fish" (p. 282). From both political and economic perspectives, this is not how an author should present an academic work. Bringing in personal thoughts and beliefs without the support of scientific research is appropriate only when writing fiction. What is unique in this case is that this is a social science research work that is meant to inform the policy makers and academicians.

Rodrik (2011) says, " The council of elders thought it was fair and they asked the fishermen to increase their monthly contributions" (p. 282). The quality of this content may be good in describing the historical past, but presentation as a work of research is poor (Stone, 2015). This statement describes an event that took place, but the manner in which it is told makes it appear to be a fiction work. These are major areas of weaknesses that this author failed to address.

In a democratic world, people will always champion for issues that have direct impacts on the quality of their lives. In such circumstances, a country

may find itself in a challenging situation that Rodrik (2011) calls trilemma. Countries are struggling to balance democracy, economic globalization, and national interests (Weinstein, 2010). It is at such points that democracy is seen to go against the interest of globalization.

The book also focuses on the overreliance of the emerging economies on the developed economies. In 2008/2009 economic recession, countries all over the world suffered because of the economic turmoil in the United States. The author insists that as we move to a global society, individual nations should reduce their reliance on the developed economies. Generally, the content of the book is great, but the manner of presentation makes it to appear more of fiction than a work of research.

A critical analysis of this book from political and economic perspectives shows that the author did a great job in analyzing the emerging trends in democracy, globalization, and the conflict of interests that comes with them. His advice to the global society is simple. Whenever a global interest is in conflict with national interest, then it may be better to let the national interest to prevail.

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