

Predictions on theme of globalization

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In Medieval Europe, small regional bands of settlers constituted the most basic political entity as Feudalism flourished. Several centuries later, the Peace of Westphalia recognized the nation-state as the heart of political organizations and sovereignty. As social, political, economic, and even cultural norms extend beyond the nation-state, what will the future look like, given transitions in history such as the nation-state taking the place of Feudalism? Manfred Steger presents two subjects pertaining to the future in his novel *Globalization*. Steger's first theme is that globalization's future relies heavily on countries working together to resolve the global climate crisis. The second point that Steger illustrates is that America looks beyond its borders and "considers the entire world its geopolitical sphere of influence" (p. 131). Although the United States emphasizes its preeminence, it does not fit the model of a typical empire.

Essayist David McNeill's piece "Out of the Shadows: Can Japan's Nuclear Power Renaissance Reduce Global Emission?" demonstrates Steger's theme that the global environmental crisis plays a crucial role in determining the future of globalization. As relations in the Middle East have proven unpredictable and affect the oil supply, Japan's leaders are turning to nuclear energy to sustain the country as concerns for oil have mounted. Carbon dioxide emissions have reached exorbitant levels, and Japan is poised at the forefront of discussions that involve nuclear power as more countries have expressed an interest in it as a sustainable energy source that reduces carbon emissions and increases energy security by decreasing dependence on imported energy sources. McNeill indicates that Japan's leaders are thrilled, but civilian opposition to nuclear energy as a form of heating and

electricity is fierce. To combat the pessimism, leaders hope that lobbying and convincing the public will be sufficient to eliminate lingering doubts, shift paradigms, and promote nuclear energy as a viable option. McNeill's piece indicates that while leaders vigorously stimulate change, the only way they can succeed is if they cooperate with citizens, instead of pushing reform on them. Furthermore, the fossil fuels that are used to create oil are not renewable resources, and change is impeding unless global consumption patterns can be modified. Like Steger's view that the global energy crisis will shape the future of globalization, McNeill's writing exhibits the importance of even one nation's energy policy to global climate trends. "Out of the Shadows" is also significant because it illustrates that the world integrates unevenly as a consequence of globalization. Although Japan is facilitating the helm of nuclear energy, other countries are now considering its benefits and may follow Japan's lead.

Steger's topic that the world functions as America's realm of authority is also evident in McNeill's article. Market globalism, an ideology which cites free markets and consumerism as the driving forces of globalization, is most often associated with America although it is not like a typical empire that exercises authority over territories. America's estimation plays a critical role in determining the success of Japan's nuclear program. For example, commercial investors disapprove of nuclear energy because it is neither profitable nor safe as an investment. This concept was also portrayed in the blatant opinion expressed by financial analysts in a statement such as "Wall Street doesn't like nuclear power" (McNeill, p. 2). The United States is depicted as a compass for determining political and even economic decisions

because the globe is regarded as its sphere of influence. Japanese leaders realized that America's estimation is important and that they could benefit from a mutual relationship. As massive global industries began to emerge, these Japanese-U. S. companies became formidable players in advancing awareness of nuclear power. Both countries had economic, political, and environmental issues on the line which could result in huge payoffs and industrial investment. As McNeill points out “ staunch technological support from Tokyo's United States ally and corporate pressure to find alternative power sources to the Middle East long ago trumped civilian concerns” (p. 4). McNeill's article backs Steger's theme that America utilizes the world as its sphere of influence.

In addition, capitalism and market globalism are important elements that constitute America's empire. The writings of Steger and McNeill address similar topics, and one subject is the future of globalization. Steger argues that nations' abilities to transform the global environment will dictate globalization. McNeill asserts that if consumption patterns are not altered with respect to nonrenewable energy, change is imminent. He adds that nuclear energy will be a hard sell as long as the disjunction exists between Japan's leaders trying to force change upon citizens without seeking cooperation. Finally, both authors stress America's influence on members of the global community. Although the U. S. does not constitute a typical empire, market globalism and consumerism are extensions of this empire. The U. S. has aided Japan in developing nuclear energy as a global industry. McNeill implies the driving force being the two nations' partnership is the potential for huge payoffs and deep discounts.