
post-crisis austerity, summed up in the slogan, “we won’t pay for your crisis” is one of the responses contained in actually existing politics since 2007 (and for example, in the recent student protests and occupations of major Italian landmarks). Certainly this work therefore represents not simply a theoretical reflection, but also one of the primary sources for understanding the international struggles against austerity in the aftermath of the crisis currently taking place.

Globalisation and Democracy

The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World by Dani Rodrik, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011, pp. 346, ISBN 978-0-393-07161-0, £16.99 (hbk.)

By Louise Gonsalvez

Democracies have the right to protect their social arrangements, and when this right clashes with the requirements of the global economy, it is the latter that should give way. (Rodrik, 2011, p. xix)

In *The Globalization Paradox*, Dani Rodrik argues that globalization, or more exactly ‘hyperglobalization,’ presents an undeniable and untenable ‘trilemma’, situated between democracy, national self-determination, and economic globalization. Given the difficulties of combining these, he believes that economists and civil society alike must make a choice, urging that the democratic voice should trump global tendencies. Entertaining, anecdotal and humorous, Rodrik presents insights into the historical makings of globalization, starting as far back as the East India Company that engineered its own army, distribution, and marketing schemes. He includes discussions about voyageurs in Canada’s colonial past, Adam Smith, Bretton Woods, the gold standard, and the Washington Consensus. In doing so, he creates an engaging text most suitable for people who seek to not only understand the economic drivers of today, but to also shape them.

Rodrik, who is a professor of International Political Economy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, claims that a new narrative is necessary in the financial free market economy, which favours deregulation, and recommends that a more moderate globalization replace the ongoing hyperglobalization that has fed the elite, and disenfranchised outliers in the marginalized zones. The title of

the book, however, is somewhat misleading, as the author really focuses on the irony of his deduction – the solution would be global governance but the answer lies in using the democratic voice to protect the unique features and needs of the state.

Rodrik claims that the nation state is the glue that still binds economies, societies, and cultures together, in spite of the technoscapes, ideoscapes, and mediascapes that continue to lure us towards a new way of being. Thus he argues that the nation state has been, is, and will continue to be a pillar of economic stability and growth:

The nation state is *passé*. Borders have disappeared. Distance is dead. The earth is flat. Our identities are no longer bound by our place of birth. Domestic politics is being superseded by newer, more fluid forms of representation that transcend national boundaries. Authorities are moving from domestic rule-makers to transnational networks of regulators ... And yet look at the way events have unfolded in the recent crisis of 2007-2008. Who bailed out the global banks to prevent the financial crisis from becoming even more cataclysmic? (p. 207)

Unfortunately, the author glazes over the global governance issues as though it were a futuristic scenario, rather than acknowledging existing elements of expression in the form of transnational corporations, free trade agreements, and 21st century resource imperialism (e.g. Shell, outsourcing and maquiladores, the Niger Delta). He presents global governance too simplistically, not considering that it is not only at the mercy of democratic choice, but also at the same time subject to the agency of elite groups (e.g., corporate, state, and wealthy elites/and or conglomerates). But he does provocatively raise a serious question. How much longer can we allow globalization to underscore democracy?

Rodrik draws upon a 7th Century fox and hedgehog analogy to describe how economists dabble with securities. According to the Greek poet Archilochus, as cited by Rodrik, “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing” (p. 114). Rodrik states:

The distinction captures neatly the divide within economics between the hedgehogs who think freeing up markets is always the right solution (the “big idea”) and the foxes who believe the devil is in the details. Foxes believe in markets too – they are economists, after all – but they believe real world complications require a much more cautious approach that is sensitive to context. (p. 114)

In other words, hedgehogs like to play more often in the unfettered highly de-regulated global market, while the foxes tend to act more cautiously as does domestic finance which

is “underpinned by common standards, deposit insurance, bankruptcy rules, court-enforced contracts, a lender-of-last-resort, a fiscal backstop, and an alphabet soup of regulatory and supervisory agencies” (p. 113). In effect, hedgehogs are highballers who never look back in the rear view mirror of their jets and yachts because they are racing forward at lightning speed, flying too far above the clouds, or they just don’t care about the aftermath of destruction that trails in their wake.

I recommend reading this book as it is informative, entertaining, and enlightening. It has its shortcomings but ultimately it captures the heart of global economics today, and it often does so in a refreshing and humorous way. Rodrik steps outside the box to critique not only globalization, but also the future of democracy and the economists who play a central role in determining the narrative that will be followed in the future. He reasons that we can’t compromise on democracy, and argues that state democracy remains a pillar of economic growth.

Violence: Capitalism, Language and Physical Force

Violence. Six Sideways Reflections by Slavoj Žižek. Profile Books, 2009, pp. 218, ISBN 978-1-84668-027-4, £8.99 (pbk.)

By Charles Barthold

Slavoj Žižek is omnipresent within Anglophone academe, even though he lives and works in Slovenia. He is one of the most influential of radical contemporary philosophers along with other figures such as Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière and Toni Negri. Žižek overtly defends communist ideas, as the conference which he organised with Costas Douzinas on ‘the idea of communism’ in 2010 clearly displayed.

His two main intellectual sources of inspiration are Marxism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, even though he draws on a considerable philosophical repertoire, including German idealism, (in particular Hegel), phenomenology (Heidegger, Husserl) and contemporary philosophy (Postmodernism, Sloterdijk, New Philosophers). Žižek is mostly very critical of the approaches of Postmodernist philosophy, as they would be fascinated by the dynamic of late capitalism. However, Žižek does not only produce psychoanalytical or philosophical commentaries, as he also analyses film, series and popular culture generally speaking. In other words, Žižek mingles ‘serious’ references