

**Thomas, Caroline and Peter Wilkin (eds.). 1999. Globalization, Human Security and the African Experience. Lynne Reinner Publishers. Boulder, Colorado. vii + 206 pp. + index.**

I would like to begin the review of Thomas' and Wilken's book by reminding the reader of this review of the significance of the "Study of Africa" and the contributions of research on Africa, Africans, and the African civilizations to the world affairs and the advancement of knowledge in all the existing disciplines in academia. It is often the case that when it comes to global matters, Africa is relegated to the periphery regardless of the enormous contributions that come from the continent. Thomas' and Wilken's book clearly emphasizes the importance of the study of Africa in the quest for understanding global issues. The current issue facing global community is how to proceed with the phenomenon of "Globalization". Africa points the way. Perhaps the conclusion of the "Introduction" written by Caroline Thomas best describes my point:

The conclusion to the collection highlights a few signposts that may contribute to furthering the debate on human security. The people of Africa are pursuing human security through their own efforts, and these efforts are stressed. An alternative agenda for research is put forward that will promote a better understanding of the impact of the global economy on human security. From this improved understanding will grow the opportunity for international financial institutions to develop more sensitive policies. Ultimately, human security requires different developmental strategies. (p.19)

Africa will continue to play important role in human understanding of global affairs and phenomena. This not a recent role that Africa is playing in global affairs. The advancements in many areas of study owe a great deal to the study of Africa and Africans. In general, the book explores the underpinnings of traditional security studies and the globalization of world politics. It attempts to reveal the relationships of globalization with critical security matters. Finally, the authors endeavor to provide a "cocktail" of theories and case studies about globalization.

A close reading of the chapters indicates that there are two main aims of the book which are to give a human touch to the issues surrounding security and, to give the readers vivid examples of human perspectives to security by providing examples from Africa. Quite clearly, it appears that the editors and the contributors have managed to generate an alternative debate and explanation for how to examine security in a global economy.

In their approach, they have deviated from the state centered explanation of security and the emphasis is on human beings and complex, social and economic relations. The overarching

argument in this book is that there are interconnections between the evolving global economy, the state and the human experience. The interconnections present an important scenario which makes the relationship between development and human security paramount in the debate on globalization.

First of all, it is of utmost importance to note that the editors have provided a working definition upon which the contributors examine and debate globalization. Their definition of globalization is that it “refers broadly to the processes whereby power is located in global social formations and expressed through global networks rather than through territorially based states.” The contributors to this volume have a rather unique perspective that globalization is centered on capitalism and that wealth accumulation is a global phenomenon and not just at a national scale.

This book is organized into two parts. In the first part, the contributors focus on the concepts surrounding “human security and class in a global economy”, “Feminist perspectives on security in a global economy”, “security and community in globalizing world” and “justice and security.” This reviewer thinks that the first part of the book, together with the introductory chapter is a sincere attempt to establish the relationship between globalization and security and to examine the challenges encountered in the efforts to attain security through globalization process.

The second part of the book is more specific and the chapters in this part empirically examine concepts related to: class, community, gender, justice and race. The empirical examinations (case studies) are from Senegal, Rwanda, The Horn of Africa, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Ali Mazrui's chapter takes the reader through a discussion of African security in general.

The last chapter of the book which centers on how to further the debate on human security takes the reader through the African experience which this reviewer thinks offers support to the argument which was made at the beginning of this review—the study of Africa and Africans provides understanding of global phenomena.

Overall, this is a very good book and as such, it is highly recommended as a complementary text for the study of global issues and globalization. It is also very highly recommended for development studies at graduate and undergraduate levels and it is a good reference book for the libraries.

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