

Patrick J. McGowan and Philip Nel (ed) Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International Relations Textbook for Africa, University of Cape Town Press, Cape Town, 2000, pp. 388. ISBN: 1 919713 64 6.

International relations as a sub-field of study has become dominate in the study of political science and development discourse in general. There has been increased need in comprehension of issues that are involved and in the process guide actors in their interactions and actions. The book is well set to provide and illuminate issues in the study of international relations from the African perspective to be specific. The book is divided into two sections, the first providing general issues in the study of international relations and the second that deals with Africa's international relations. As the title suggests, the book is a useful tool for those wanting to understand and comprehend international relations.

Chapter one by Patrick J. McGowan and Philip Nel marks as an introduction to the book and section one to be specific. It surveys what international relations is and proceeded to identify actors in international relations. The last part of the chapter is of value in terms of methodology and the scientific nature of studying international relations. Of importance is outlining of the levels of analysis and types of causes in international relations. The value of international relations was emphasised as the authors noted, 'international relations can provide a breadth and depth of understanding that is a precondition for finding practical answers'.p.19.

Chapter two by Philip Nel attempts to analyse theories of international relations beginning with classical examples from ancient Greek states. The author distinguished conservative theories and critical/transformational theories noting the major tenets and their

applicability to analysing international relations. However, the chapter lacks in-depth analysis of major international relations theory in general terms.

Philip Nel in chapter three examined the place of morality and ethics in international relations. The author begun by conceptualising morality and ethics, and went on to examining issue of morality within the framework of realism. Using the normative and empirical debate issues of ethics were brought to fore and strategies of ethical decision-making illuminated. Aspects of global distributive justice were alluded to.

Antony Leysens and Lisa Thompson traced the evolution of the global political economy in Chapter four. An overview and conceptualisation of global political economy was alluded to in the first part. The historical origins were traced from the birth of modern state system in 1648 through to the 19th century. The authors went on to explore the 20th Century periods from the world wars period, the birth of Bretton woods institutions, and subsequent periods of the end of the fixed exchange rate system, decolonisation, the oil crises, the rise of newly industrialized countries, the end of cold war and emergence of globalisation trends. The authors rounded up by examining the place of developing countries vis-à-vis global political economy in year 2000 and beyond. In essence they noted, 'in terms of the evolving nature of global political economy, notions of sustainable development reflect a shift towards trying to combine further integration into the world economy with community values rather than purely liberal individualistic values'.p.91.

In Chapter five Korwa G. Adar examined the concept of the state system. The author traced the origins of the modern state system and went on examine the major units of the modern interstate system alluding to the concepts of nation, state, sovereignty and national power. Forms of interaction among states were also alluded to. The author note in the final that 'by establishing sovereign states, the world has come up with a mechanism to do just that, and in principle, at least, has ensured that no one can prescribe from outside how the people should govern themselves. State sovereignty is, therefore, not something to be given up lightly'p.108.

In chapter six Anton du Plessis dealt with foreign policy issues. He began by conceptualizing foreign policy and giving reasons for studying foreign policy. Approaches to the study of foreign policy, i.e. traditional, comparative foreign policy and critical foreign policy were examined in greater detail. The author rounded off by analysing the evaluation of foreign policy.

Craig N Murphy and Karen Smith in Chapter seven dwelt on multilateral institutions. The authors began by problematising issues of cooperation among sovereigns and went on to analyse how international law has necessitated cooperation and subsequent evolution of international institutions. They also distinguished global international institutional and regional institutions and concluded by explaining international institutions.

Louise Vincent in Chapter eight had the task of examining the place of non-state actors in the international system. Of importance she identified the non-state actors to include: first group; liberation movements, secessionist groups, terrorists and criminal organisations; second group, international non-governmental organisations and transnational social movements; thirdly, multinational corporations and lastly, individuals. She reiterated that 'international relations is now about the study of actors other than states as much as it is about the relationships between states...While their (non state actors) rise in profile does not necessarily mean that we are witnessing the eminent demise of the nation state, it does call for a new approach to international relations, an approach which sees the world as a multidimensional and characterised by multiple, complex interactions, rather than by interactions between states alone'.p. 162.

Janis Van der Westhuizen in Chapter nine rounded off part one by examining the relationship between globalisation and the South. He offers the definition of globalisation and went on to allude to the causes of globalisation. The author contrasted the different perspectives of globalisation and explained how markets, mafias and transnational social movements have been reshaping the state particularly those in the south. In essence the author highlighted that 'by examining the way in which the interplay between markets, movements and mafias affects the capacity of states to

globalisation, one can illuminate the kind of problems facing the developing world, in order to have a more meaningful say in the process of global governance'p.175.

Egoshia E. Osaghae and Patrick J. McGowan began part two on Africa's international relations analysing Africa's place in the global system in historical perspective beginning in the period 1600 to the period of decolonisation. They provided a brief theoretical overview to understanding the African conditions. A brief comment was provided for the period before 1600. The authors examined in great detail the period from 1600 to the period of partition and from colonialism to decolonisation period.

Chapter eleven by Roger Southall and Daniel Conway examined Africa in contemporary world. In relation to the outside world the authors were quicker to note that 'Africa is becoming less important to the outside world at the very same time as it is becoming more subject to external dictates and constraints. This marginalisation is both economic and political.'p.195. They analysed the state of Africa questioning the degree of unity and preceded to qualify on issues of independence, dependence and examining factors that contributed to economic decline. The authors analysed how the Cold War impacted negatively on Africa and elucidated on issues surrounding Afro-Arab unity. The coming of structural adjustment and political liberalization was dwelt on and the authors are convinced that 'the IFIs and African leaders remain uncertain whether political conditionality promotes, or throws up more obstacles to, sustained economic growth.'p.207. The possible futures and the factors at hand in terms of disaster or development were alluded to in the last section.

In chapter twelve Max Schoeman examined Africa's international relations. The characteristics of African state were analysed and these provided a basis through which the relations amongst African state and the outside world could be understood as well as other non-state actors. The author rounded up by examining the future of Africa's international relations and in the final noting, 'Africa's international relations, whether relations with its external environment or with fellow African countries, are largely

determined by, and at best understood in light of, domestic circumstances and needs.’p.229.

Funmi Olonisakin in chapter thirteen explored issues of conflict and conflict resolution in Africa. She conceptualised conflict and identified the sources and types of conflict prevalent in Africa. Methods of conflict resolution and actors in conflict resolution in Africa were examined in detail and relevant examples were given.

In chapter fourteen Garth le Pere and Antony van Nieuwkerk dwell on the South African case study analysing the evolution of its foreign policy since the attainment of majority rule. Two eras of foreign policy were analysed, first, that of President Mandela that featured foreign policy of transition and secondly, that of President Mbeki which featured the consolidation of the foreign policy process that saw the redesigning of the foreign policy decision making institutions. The authors rounded off by examining how the new system has been driving foreign policy making in South Africa. For them ‘only time will tell whether the new instruments, approaches and techniques of foreign policy under president Mbeki’s stewardship will have contributed to re-shaping current values and norms in the international community, by promoting greater equity and justice in our increasingly turbulent and inequitable world order.’p.266.

Patrick J. McGowan in Chapter fifteen analysed the interactions in the southern African region beginning with pre-colonial period through to colonial period. Greater attention was given to contemporary period where issues of economic, organizational, political and military interaction were examined in greater detail and pertinent examples being cited.

The last chapter by Jane L Parpart and Timothy M Shaw examined the most challenging aspect of Africa’s condition, that of analysing development debates in Africa and attempting to cite prospects for Africa’s development in the twenty-first century. They noted in particular that, ‘the African continent and its development, thus, must be situated in the context of powerful ongoing forces –both positive and negative.’p298. On the future of development, for the authors, ‘dreams and plans for a positive African future

will depend on committed people, organisations and states, and on continuing NGO activism. It will also require widespread consultation with the people of Africa.'p.306.

The book's two appendixes require a mention. The first by Patrick J McGowan is important for those who want further information from the Internet. The second by Kato Lambrechts offers insights to those who want to study and have careers in international relations.

All things considered the text is good introductory book for those who want to have some knowledge of international relations as it pertains to developing countries, in particular Africa. For beginners this book is highly recommended as it presents issues in well-simplified manner for easier comprehension.

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