

Hanson, G. Eric. 2002. The Culture of Strangers: Globalization, Localization and the Phenomenon of Exchange. University Press of America, Lanham (Maryland), N.Y, N.Y., Oxford. Paperback . Price: Unknown x + 355 pages + Bibliography + index

Recently, the issues concerning globalization have resurfaced with a bang. Debates about global economic integration, globalization of culture, globality are demanding attention. In concert with issues of globalization are vexing problems brought about as a result of multi-culturalism. Hanson's book challenges the trends of the current debates about globalization and multiculturalism.

Modernity as currently defined resulted from commercial ambitions of the West. There is no doubt that Western culture of expansion and capitalism enlarged the world of consumerism. A globalized world has been put into place through the democratic and capitalist ambitions of Western economies. What this does is that it enables entrepreneurship to flourish, and humanity the capacity to acquire the goods of economic prosperity, wealth of individuals and communities to be enhanced. Hansen makes the following observation:

On the personal level, (again citing Maslow), human beings all seek, as a condition of their humanity, the ultimate "self-actualization.: The impulse is toward "full-humanness, the development of the biologically based nature of man, and therefore is (empirically) normative for the whole species rather than for particular times and places (p.5).

The Culture of Strangers is truly an effort to understand and explain how people in different societies interact and exchange more than just goods and services but also share their similarities and celebrate their differences. This argument is strongly supported by the author when he notes:

I propose a model of cultural development which, paralleling Wilson, Maslow, and Parsons, assumes that human beings live in cultural worlds or paradigms which are systematically directed toward inner coherence as they deal with fundamental categories such as matter, individuation, action, space, time, and motion, which together shape the phenomenon of exchange (p.7).

In efforts to build institutions, humans attempt to minimize the use of their environment and resources. Commercial culture's goal is to enhance the building of human institutions which disregards religious believers, or kinship or nation-state ideologies. This idea is manifested in the steady rise in the number of multinational cooperation which does business around the world.

Recent studies and publications some of which have been in the Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa (JSDA) have presented arguments for and against globalization. Jansen's work appears to

be expertly done to illustrate how the process of development in the human competitive world of exchange plays out in today's contemporary society. It offers explanations for individual and group/society endeavors to actualize their dreams of success (which is sometimes economic) through a commercial culture. This book is intellectually stimulating, contains excellent scholarship and it is a must read for students of development studies. It is recommended as a supplemental text for sustainability and global studies.

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