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<i>Editorial Introduction</i>	1
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	5
<i>Non-governmental Organisations and International Norm Transmission on the Fault Lines of the International Order</i> Introduction Alex Mills and Daniel Joyce	11
Ukraine's Orange Revolution, NGOs and the Role of the West Andrew Wilson	21
The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries? Stephen F Jones	33
The Promise of Transnational NGO Dialogue: The Argument and the Challenges Kateryna Pishchikova	49
<i>The Economic and Social Dimension of US Foreign Policy: The Challenge of Europe and Multilateralism</i> Introduction Kern Alexander	63
Early American Views Regarding European Unification Patrick J Hearden	67
Human Rights Disparities between Europe and the United States: Conflicting Approaches to Poverty Prevention and the Alleviation of Suffering William F Felice	79
Internet Governance in a Multipolar World: Challenging American Hegemony David Drissel	105
EU-US Trade Disputes about Risk Regulation: The Case of Genetically Modified Organisms Arno Scherzberg	121
From a Rhetoric of Nostalgia to a Health-Based Policy: Tobacco, Obesity and the WTO Brent Pickett	139

Essay

'Bringing Geopolitics Back In': Exploring the Security Dimension of the 2004 Eastern Enlargement of the European Union

John O'Brennan

155

Book Reviews and Responses

Book Review Forum: David M Andrews (ed), *The Atlantic Alliance Under Stress: US-European Relations after Iraq*

John Dumbrell

171

Helga Haftendorn

172

Thierry de Montbrial

173

Richard Rupp

175

David M Andrews

176

Georges-Henri Soutou

178

Marc Trachtenberg

180

Thomas L Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*

Erik Andre Andersen, Birgit Lindsnæs and Stig Ree (eds), *På vej mod nye globale strategier: Offentlige goder og menneskerettigheder*

Riad Ajami, C Edward Arrington, Falconer Mitchell and Hanne

Nørreklit (eds), *Globalisation, Management Control & Ideology, Local and Multinational Perspectives*

Jørgen Ørstrøm Møller

181

The Dignity of Difference in the Face of Global Markets – Response to Jørgen Ørstrøm Møller

Riad Ajami, C Edward Arrington, Falconer Mitchell and Hanne Nørreklit

185

Christopher Coker, *The Future of War: The Re-enchantment of War in the Twenty-First Century*

Herfried Münkler, *The New Wars*

Charles Jones

186

Bernard-Henri Lévy, *War, Evil, and the End of History*

Josef Ansorge

189

Gary Hart, *The Fourth Power: A Grand Strategy for the United States in the Twenty-First Century*

Charles Edel

191

Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*

Stephen Whitehead

192

~~People, of course, do not like to hear these things, but I think it is irresponsible to assume that such developments can simply be ruled out.~~

~~Note that none of this depends on a judgement about policy – that is, about George W Bush's or Jacques Chirac's or Gerhard Schröder's policy. I am just talking about the way the international system works. I am simply assuming that power and interest still play fundamental roles in shaping the course of events. Even if I were a European deeply opposed to the Bush strategy in Iraq, I would still analyse things in these terms. But I am also enough of a realist to believe that, other things being equal, it is to everyone's interest to have as many friends and as few adversaries as possible. It is for that reason, at least to my mind, that the Western alliance is worth saving – but only if an adequate political basis for it can be found. Political unity, however, rests not on deals that leaders strike behind closed doors, but on a genuine meeting of the minds. And it is in that area, I think, that we in the academic community (and I am including here the readers of this journal) can play a real role. Given what is at stake, it is important that we put all the clichés aside and deal with these issues in a serious and scholarly way. But when I look at the political behaviour of the intellectual class in both America and in Europe in recent years, I have to admit that I do not see much chance of that happening.~~

~~Marc Trachtenberg –
University of California at Los Angeles~~

Thomas L Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, New York, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, ISBN 037292884, 488 pp

Erik Andre Andersen, Birgit Lindsnæs and Stig Ree (eds) (ed), *På vej mod nye globale strategier: Offentlige goder og menneskerettigheder*, Copenhagen, Jurist- og Økonomforbundets forlag, ISBN 8757411816, 500 pp

Riad Ajami, C Edward Arrington, Falconer Mitchell and Hanne Nørreklit (eds) *Globalisation, Management Control & Ideology, Local and Multinational Perspectives*, Copenhagen, DJØF, ISBN 8757410003, 312 pp

The World Is Flat is a fascinating book capturing one of the great swings of civilisation. It is written in a smooth, elegant and lucid style, combining analysis with personal experience. Thomas L Friedman hits the nail on the head with his description of globalisation, its consequences, imperatives and options. He leaves the reader in no doubt that globalisation stands for higher growth and higher total wealth than any other model the world has ever seen. The frequently quoted example is that 400,000 American Internal Revenue Service returns were prepared in India last year. Another example (not mentioned in the book) is that 20,000 American high school students are helped by Indian math teachers, generating revenue of US\$2 billion per year.

Friedman's dictionary tells us that the world has seen three great waves: Globalisation 1.0 started in the year 1492 with Columbus and ended around 1800. It was controlled by nation states jumping into the international fry. Globalisation 2.0 has been with us from about 1800 to date. The keywords are 'multinational

companies' and 'Western countries'. Globalisation 3.0 is taking off now. It is about individuals operating, thinking and acting globally, and it may well take place outside the Western nations that have been at the helm since 1492.

The author makes ten points in relation to globalisation which are the flywheels for a world dominated by competition and moulded in the shape of American capitalism. First, he tells of how, in 1989, walls (the Berlin Wall) came down and windows (the computer system) came up. Second, he tells of how the IT bubble in the second half of the 1990s channelled enormous funds into wiring the globe, thus providing the infrastructure for informatics and communication. Friedman's other eight points basically flesh out what the new technology means for companies and people removing barriers, introducing transparency and new rules for the competitive game. All points are described clearly and are easily understandable, even more so thanks to the convincing anecdotal evidence. That is not a weakness of the book; it is its strength. Undoubtedly, Friedman's observation, descriptions, and decoding confirm the views of the upper class, intellectual, international segment of society, which Friedman himself belongs to.

The result constitutes a convincing case for globalisation as the model for the 21st century: invincible, almighty, sweeping everything aside in its stride. At the same time, one wonders about the geopolitical consequences of the seminal shift from the Western world to Asia – unquestionably the part of the world which is catching on to globalisation fastest. I do not want to criticise Friedman for not covering this aspect, since no author can or should discuss everything and focusing upon a one or two major themes is the ultimate art of transmitting your message. Apparently Friedman sees the world as a whole or perhaps he sees the global political and economic steering system unchanged in the 21st century. Yet, this is unlikely. As China and India gain economic speed they will want a say in how to run the world, and that will require American acquiescence. Some of the existing and sometimes abundantly obvious American preponderance must be shared with the newcomers: a tough strategic decision for any American president, and one that seems unlikely to be taken by the incumbent one.

In the chapter 'Geopolitics and the Flat World', Friedman presents his philosophical premises. He does not enter into the global decision-making process but takes the view that the stronger and indispensable supply chain – the fact that no nation state can cope alone outside globalisation – makes conflicts much less likely. Two examples – and good ones – are pushed under the nose of the reader. The rejection by Taiwan's population in 2004 of a more belligerent attitude vis-à-vis China reflected hesitation towards the policy put forward by President Chen Shui-bian for a referendum paving the way for independence. The population of Taiwan wanted none of this because their economy was so intricately associated with China that it would suffer dramatically if a conflict arose. The second example is India's softer stance against Pakistan in 2002, when India's policy makers became aware for the first time of India's role as a host country for IT outsourcing. India's role in the global supply chain would suffer if other partners in the supply chain started to worry. In short, both Taiwan and India suddenly glimpsed the limitations on foreign and security policy that emerge as soon as you have found a place in the sunshine of globalisation. This leads Friedman to coin the Dell theory of international politics: no two countries that are both part of the same major global supply chain, like Dell's, will ever fight a war against each other as long as they both remain part of that global supply chain.

Maybe, maybe not. The same point was made before 1914, when it was argued that the world had become so economically interwoven that a war was unthinkable. And yet, the unthinkable happened. The argument also leaves out the burning question of what to do with the nation states that are not members of a global supply chain. It would be fascinating to enter into discussion about the diminishing role of the nation state. In today's world, the military threat is not directed against the nation state but against the functioning of communities, networks, supply chains, demand circles operating inside the nation states. Yet, precisely because of globalisation, they have very little to do with the nation state as such.

The catchphrase 'The world is flat', which Friedman takes from a conversation with an Indian businessman about the levelling of playing fields, is brilliant. It reveals that not only is globalisation synonymous with distribution of labour, competition, higher productivity, but it also changes the settings for the global economy. It can be put in few words: there are no hiding places; competition becomes harsh; it may be nasty and sometimes ugly.

This is where Friedman's book stumbles. Its primary and almost exclusive focus is the sunny side of the street, and it does not enter into a discussion of the worrying implications of globalisation. Report after report highlights increasing inequality; outsourcing is fine except for those losing their job or income and too old or otherwise unable to acquire other skills; Wal-Mart is great except for those (and they are counted in hundreds of thousands, maybe millions) small shopkeepers and shop assistants who have the carpet pulled from under their feet. When Friedman speaks of globalisation 3.0 being about people, he overlooks that this is primarily relevant for the higher echelons of society. The majority of the population may use IT, but they cannot do so in an international context. Globalisation 3.0 actually dichotomises nations and communities between those taking an active part in globalisation and identifying themselves as 'internationals', and those who use IT as a tool in their daily work but are mentally still located inside the national box.

Globalisation is the best model ever bestowed upon the world. Handled and controlled in the right way it will ensure unprecedented growth and welfare to millions and millions, indeed to the large majority of the global population. But – and this is an important 'but' – handled in the wrong way, it confines the increasing wealth to a smaller and smaller share of the population, almost exclusively limited to countries that are already rich. According to the UN 2005 Human Development Report, 460 million people living in 18 of the poorest nations were better off 15 years ago than today. Recent figures show that economic inequality has risen strongly in countries such as the US, China and Korea. These countries may all have grown richer, but a larger part of the wealth is in the hands of just 10% of the population. For many, globalisation stands for a confrontation between economics (growth, wealth, durable consumer goods) and identity, built up over the centuries and firmly rooted in ethnicity, religion or language. There may be limits to how much of their identity they are willing to sacrifice to allow a smaller part of the population to get richer.

This is not a trivial problem. It is a slap in the face that cannot be ignored. It becomes a deadly threat to globalisation because most of these people think rightly or wrongly that globalisation is to blame. The rising inequality turns

globalisation into a catalyst for confrontation between those having too much and those having too little, thereby threatening the very future of globalisation.

Friedman's book is an accolade to globalisation. But it overlooks its built-in tendencies to run amok, its potential distortions and abuses. Growth, wealth, productivity, rising real incomes are not the be all and end all; the distribution of income to secure a rising living standard for the large majority must be addressed. Globalisation produces unquestionably higher growth than alternative models, but it is still an open question whether wealth is distributed sufficiently equitably to ensure political and popular support in the long run. *The World Is Flat* enumerates in an almost breathtaking way the advantages of globalisation, to the extent that we may be blinded to its deficiencies until it is too late.

The book *På vej mod nye globale strategier* is, unfortunately, in Danish and so currently mainly accessible only to a Nordic audience.¹ It starts off with Paul A Samuelson's essay from 1954, arguing that public goods make the market economy tick more efficiently. Twenty-one essays dig deeper to reveal how public goods in a global context can make our societies more resilient, more coherent and better. These essays thus offer a counterweight to Friedman's rather one-sided approach. One could say that Friedman's book has the answer and leaves no room for doubt, while it is the strength and the weakness of *På vej mod nye globale strategier* that it takes the opposite approach and gives the reader unanswered questions and doubts about globalisation itself and the role of public goods.

Globalisation, Management Control & Ideology consists of an overview and 14 essays. The book is thoughtful and brings into the open that globalisation is a mixed blessing requiring adroit management when the drive for economic efficiency encounters local values. As said in the introduction, 'There is certainly a richer mosaic of global life than economic calculations can contain' (12).

The book takes the opposite angle from Friedman's and argues that globalisation, or 'modern systems', mostly originated in the US but are now confronting local values and norms, thereby creating tension between the exigencies of globalisation and the preferences of local people. The book tries to provide some answers but leaves the thoughtful reader with more questions and uncertainty, which is not a bad thing after Friedman's cocksure presentation.

Friedman's book is a must. But many of us would do well to read books like *På vej mod nye globale strategier: Offentlige goder og menneskerettigheder* and *Globalisation, Management Control & Ideology, Local and Multinational Perspectives* to get an idea of the limitations, constraints, backlashes, distortions or even dangers and risks embedded in globalisation – so conveniently forgotten in Friedman's description.

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¹ An English translation of the book will be published in 2006.