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Introduction: Globalization at the Margins: Perspectives on Globalization from Developing States Symposium

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Symposium on Globalization at the Margins: Perspectives on Globalization from Developing States

Introduction

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The Indiana University School of Law–Bloomington and the *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* organized the Symposium on *Globalization at the Margins: Perspectives on Globalization from Developing States* to bring analytical focus to bear on the challenges that the processes of globalization present developing countries. Although many globalization analyses include developing countries within their ambit, much of the literature on globalization leaves developing countries at the margins of analysis. The Symposium was an attempt to provide a forum in which experiencing globalization at the margins became the lens through which to reflect on the implications of this enigmatic, but seemingly all prevalent, phenomenon.

The Symposium included a keynote lecture¹ and three panels: (1) Globalization, International Relations Theory, and the Developing World;² (2) Globalization of Markets and Developing States;³ and (3) Globalization, Culture, and Civil Society in Developing States.⁴ The participants come from

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1. Bruce Mazlish, *A Tour of Globalization*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 5 (1999).

2. The articles under this panel's subject are Timothy Dunne, *The Spectre of Globalization*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 17 (1999) and Gregory H. Fox, *Strengthening the State*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 35 (1999).

3. The articles under this panel's subject are Maxwell O. Chibundu, *Globalizing the Rule of Law: Some Thoughts at and on the Periphery*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 79 (1999); Ruth Gana Okediji, *Copyright and Public Welfare in Global Perspective*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 117 (1999); and David P. Fidler, *Neither Science Nor Shamans: The Globalization of Markets and Health in the Developing World*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 191 (1999).

4. The articles under this panel's subject are Kevin Brown, *Globalization and Cultural Conflict in Developing Countries: The South African Example*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 225 (1999); Gracia Clark, *The Roots of Cultural Backlash in Contemporary Processes of Globalization*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 257 (1999); and Lucy Taylor, *Globalization and Civil Society—Continuities, Ambiguities, and Realities in Latin America*, 7 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 269 (1999).

different disciplines—history, international relations, anthropology, and law. The diligent and creative work of the Symposium participants have produced a wide-ranging, diverse, and stimulating set of articles. Their contributions address important and complex subjects relevant to the future of developing States, such as the meaning of globalization; globalization and international relations theory; efforts to strengthen the State through international law; the implications of the “rule of law” concept; the global protection of intellectual property rights; the impact of globalized markets on health; cultural conflicts; and changes in the nature and dynamics of civil society.

Synthesizing the contributions of the Symposium participants has proven to be beyond the capabilities of this editor. Instead, I would like to use this Introduction to reflect on some basic themes that the contributions raise. The first is the continuing debate about the meaning of “globalization” and its political, economic, and cultural implications. In various ways, the articles draw attention to how much “globalization” remains a contested, confusing, constructed, and controversial concept. This conceptual cacophony makes analysis of the consequences of globalization difficult, particularly in connection with globalization’s impact on developing States. In addition, trying to focus on “perspectives on globalization from developing States” adds to this cacophony because globalization looks and feels like a different phenomenon empirically and normatively when one lives at the margins of world politics.

A second theme involves the importance of identifying what is old and what is new in the marginalization experienced by developing States in the global era. The contributions variously highlight that globalization merely reinforces the marginalization that developing States have long experienced in international relations. Developing countries have for decades suffered levels of poverty, conflict, and disease far greater than anything seen in the developed world. The processes of globalization have not changed some of the fundamental problems that confront indigenous and exogenous efforts to improve the political, economic, and social conditions in the developing world: ethnic tensions, corrupt or repressive governments, poor economic and social infrastructures, declining terms of trade for important exports, lack of influence in key international organizations, lack of sustained interest on the part of developed countries, and the list could go on. Developed States still hold the levers of power in the international system and are not shy about exercising their political, economic, military, technological, and legal power for national gains often at the expense of governments and peoples in

developing countries. Notions of international or world justice and universal moral solidarity remain weak, self-serving, or intolerant of the cultural diversity present in the developing world.

The marginalization experienced by many developing countries today is not, however, identical to their historical marginalization throughout twentieth century international relations. The processes of globalization have brought new changes that exacerbate developing States' marginalization. During the Cold War, the "margins" of the international system were often important to the great powers as part of the struggle for supremacy between the West and Soviet communism. With the collapse of the bipolar, ideologically divided international system, the strategic importance of many developing States disappeared. In the "new world order," many developing States find themselves marginalized in terms of the national interests of the great powers, the common interests, values, and prevailing ideology of the international society of States, and in the growing global power of non-State actors, especially multinational corporations. Layered onto all this is a deepening technological inequality that places developing States even farther behind developed States in accessing, benefitting from, and shaping the processes of globalization. Never great at any moment this century, the room for choice on the part of developing countries has narrowed considerably in the era of globalization. The political, economic, cultural, and legal paths of the global era have already been, or are currently being, blazed by the globalized States and non-State actors of the developed world.

At a deeper level, the Symposium contributions suggest that, from the perspective of developing States, the global epoch contains a double marginalization. The basic features of developing country marginalization in the Westphalian international system have not disappeared, and different types of marginalization appear as the Westphalian system undergoes stress and mutations through the unfolding dynamics of the new global political economy. Globalized marginalization of the developing world is a complex and disturbing phenomenon that has yet to run its course. Where this dynamic and enigmatic process is actually taking a great deal of humanity will be one of the most important empirical and normative questions of the next century.

