



2023

Introduction to Theme 3: Networks of Economy and Trade

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Recommended Citation

Holmes, Alison R. (2023) "Introduction to Theme 3: Networks of Economy and Trade," *csuglobaljournal*. Vol. 1: No. 1, Article 6.

DOI: [<https://doi.org/10.55671/2837-0619.1005>]

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/csuglobaljournal/vol1/iss1/6>

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THEME 3: *Networks of Economy & Trade*

“California is not just another state” according to Lord James Bryce who, in the late 1880s, argued that California, as a state was “the most striking in the whole Union, and has more than any other, the character of a great country, capable of standing alone in the world”. He went on to suggest that California was unique on various measures, but mainly its “location, half a continent removed from the rest of American civilization...an outpost of the Pacific...a staging ground for the resettlement of the final third of the continent, the mountain and Pacific West. Using Bryce, Gregory goes on to argue that the state’s mission has now changed as it “is no longer peripheral” due to the “Global economic shifts and the massive internal redistribution of peoples industries, and public policy priorities since World War II [that] have turned the United States into a bi-polar nation. California is the capital of the newer America that faces west and south towards Asia and Latin America” (Gregory, 1). Thus, it would seem that, from the beginning, California was a global state – though by accident as much as by design.

The idea of ‘globalization’ is now a mainstay of academic debate. While economists insist they were the first to identify and even to quantify this process or force, it quickly became clear that no area of private or public life – or academic pursuit or political policy - was immune to the growing extensity, intensity and velocity of global interactions and the deepening impact of such interactions around the world. Thus, the question of its nature as historical phenomenon, a specific type of change relevant to a time and place, or an overarching world view has generated countless articles in both the academic and popular press as the boundaries between domestic matters and global affairs so obviously became blurred.

Whatever its contested elements, at its most basic, the term captures the perception that there is a broadening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of life, from the cultural to the criminal, the political to the environmental – with California possible uniquely positioned at the nexus of these systems and structures. As Gerald Nash points out, historians have consistently and continue to tell California’s story as one “conceived

in the context of worldwide exploration” and, that by “pointing to the multicultural foundations of the state”, multiple historians of the state “were responding not only to the psychological needs of their own generation, but reflecting a broad view that placed the subject in a national and international framework”. (Nash, 1981)

Theme 3 - Networks of Economy and Trade seeks to address that complex array of factors and features of California’s role and approach to the world as both an actor in, and an acted upon site of all the networks at work in the state. Jaishankar Raman (Chancellor’s Office) lays out the foundations of the state’s role as a powerhouse and offers copious evidence that California has been, and continues to be, worthy of its high rank among the world’s economies. Meanwhile Xiaoye She (San Marcos) illustrates the specific California ‘turn’ towards Asia by examining the links between the Pacific West and the economies of the East. Economists clearly have a significant role in the understanding of globalization and California’s position in those processes. However, **csuglobal** begins from the widest interpretation of globalization and opens the conversation not only to the economists who have made huge contributions to our understanding of this phenomenon, but to anyone who seeks to explore the impact not only of the economic questions but the stretching and deepening impact of all our increasingly global interactions.

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csuglobal is an online journal focused on California’s engagement in the world. The online academic journal invites submissions from faculty, staff, and students on the theme ‘Networks of Economy and Trade’ through interdisciplinary lens. Submission topics include, but are not limited to:

- The impact of a technology driven state economy and the role of lower cost global technology competitors. What role does education play in enhancing California’s global competitiveness? Is there access to equitable and affordable education for all in California to compete with a mobile global workforce?
- The environmental impact of economic growth as it pertains to coastal economies, energy production and consumption.

- The use of natural resources in the development of the state, such as land and water, creates significant opportunities but also presents challenges. How does California maintain its global competitive edge in agriculture while facing increasing pressure on the use of land and water internally? The high cost of housing impacts the decisions of companies to stay or locate in California. What impact does the cost of real estate have on high growth regions internationally?
- California is exposed to the threat of natural disasters such as earthquakes, forest fires, droughts and landslides. The economic impact of such disasters is quite significant and has long term effects on the health of the economy. How does disaster preparedness compare across nations and what is the economic cost incurred by nations to achieve this?
- Income inequality in California is very high, what challenges does this present to the state to maintain a global competitive edge? How do public policy and state support systems mitigate the income gap? What are the challenges in using fiscal policy solutions?
- Migration has transformed not only the state's economy but also its culture and identities. For instance, what economic and cultural impacts have been brought by migrants from Asia and Latin America? How to analyze, compare, and identify similarities and differences in patterns of migration and their local impacts?
- Other potential areas could include but are not limited to, global political economy and its role in international business in sectors vital to California's interests.

We also encourage interdisciplinary research submissions to incorporate the other broad themes of the journal: Society Culture and Identity; Institutions, Structures, and Power; Scientific Essentials and Sustainable Environments.