

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Logging the Globe. by M. Patricia Marchak

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Economic globalization, ecological sustainability, and cultural survival constitute three of the dominant issues facing the world at the close of the twentieth century. What is remarkable about Marchak's magisterial study of the world forestry industry is that it grapples fundamentally with each of these central issues.

Globalization of economic relations is often thought of as resulting from developments associated with high-tech industries: computerization, the emerging information economy, biotechnology, etc. Yet Marchak reminds us that more traditional resource-based industries have been leaders in globalization. Like agribusiness before it, and for similar reasons, the world forest products industry is now restructuring on a global basis. The clearest manifestation of this is the declining importance of Northern forestry (dominated by the United States, Canada, and Scandinavia) and the rise in its place of Southern forestry (particularly in Indonesia, Brazil, and Chile). This shift in the locus of the forest products industry worldwide is occurring simultaneously with a shift in the form of production: from the exploitation of natural forests to the dominance of plantation forestry.

To understand the present globalization of the forest products industry one has to know something about "the profligate century" that preceded these developments. Marchak provides a detailed analysis of the destruction of Northern forests in general and of those of British Columbia in particular. This is followed by an equally detailed depiction of tropical forest destruction (based on case studies of Brazil, Chile, Thailand, and Indonesia, as well as other Southeast Asian countries). From this it is clear that the future of the forest industry lies with plantation production. Both low labor costs and the faster growth rate of trees favor the South. The shift in the locus of production through the agency of multinational corporations is greatest where pulp production is concerned. The eucalyptus tree, now cultivated for pulp on huge plantations, grows to commercial size in five to seven years in the warmer climates, outperforming anything that Northern forestry can produce. Marchak argues that Japan, with its vast demand for wood, has led the way in this global sourcing of wood products and in the overall process of globalization in the industry.

Logging the Globe, by M. Patricia Marchak.
Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press,
1995. 404 pp. \$49.95 cloth. ISBN: 0-7735-
1345-0. \$19.95 paper. ISBN: 0-7735-1346-9.

Logging the Globe goes on to analyze the ecological implications of these changes. Marchak carefully documents the unsustainable exploitation of both temperate and tropical forests. In addition, she raises issues about the ecological consequences of plantation forestry, with its sterile monoculture, and highlights the toxic wastes associated with pulp and paper production.

More impressive still, Marchak finds space in her complex and ambitious study to explore questions of cultural survival and the preservation of sustainable communities. Glimpses are offered of the struggles of indigenous peoples in British Columbia; of tribal people in the Amazon and shifting cultivators worldwide; of villagers in Thailand defending the commons through logging bans; of the landless poor and transmigrants in Indonesia. Special attention is given to village-based forest collectives in Japan, a country in which 67 percent of the land is forested (second only to Finland among temperate-zone countries) and how this sustainable approach to forestry is being undermined by the larger Japanese development model, which derives its vast demand for wood products almost entirely from imports on the world market. In a brilliant concluding chapter, Marchak argues that "human life may depend on the survival of communities as much as trees depend on larger ecosystems," providing a combined ecosocial critique of contemporary economic development trends in the forest products industry—one that should prove of immense interest to environmental sociologists.

The main weakness of *Logging the Globe* lies, ironically, in its geographical limits (which are not quite global). One hungers to know more about the fate of Russia's still vast forests now that they are open to the world market; about forests in Africa (particularly Zaire); and about China, which ranks fifth among the world's paper-producing countries and sixth among pulp-producing countries, but which derives most of its pulp from

nonwood sources. Still, by offering a general analysis of globalization within the realm of forestry, *Logging the Globe* provides the framework from which one can fruitfully analyze the future of the forest product

industries in these regions as well. No other work comes so close to embracing the full global dimensions of the momentous transformation of the world's forests in our time.

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The idea of globalization conjures up familiar images of computers, cars, and clothing being produced here, assembled there, and sold somewhere else under the aegis of free-wheeling transnational corporations (TNCs) eagerly scouring the globe for cheap labor, lucrative finance, compliant governments, and niche markets. Less well known perhaps is that everyday items in our supermarket shopping trolleys have found their way there by similar processes. Contributing to an explanation of how and why this has come about is the task undertaken by the 19 authors of *From Columbus to ConAgra: The Globalization of Agriculture and Food*.

The book examines the strategies of and local responses to the globalization of agriculture and food, and the theoretical issues emerging from them. Within this framework the editors have assembled original contributions from an interdisciplinary, international group of neo-lefty sociologists, economists, and geographers concerned with the nature and extent of the influence exerted by TNCs over the production, distribution, and consumption of food. In an overly segmented academic world it is always pleasing to see scholars from a variety of disciplines contributing to a common cause, and for the most part the editors maintain a strong unity of style throughout, ensuring a logical coherence to both the form and content. Those otherwise unacquainted with the vagaries of globalization will here find it unpacked in a concise (if somewhat repetitive and monotheoretical) form, while those chapters touching on the politics of research and development, public health issues, and "taste creation" in exotic fruits provide a refreshing twist for those who suspect there is little new to be said on the subject.

The sins of *From Columbus to ConAgra* are primarily those of omission rather than commission. Once one accepts the general thesis of globalization, its history and contemporary manifestations, surely the most inter-

From Columbus to ConAgra: The Globalization of Agriculture and Food, edited by **Alessandro Bonanno, Lawrence Busch, William H. Friedland, Lourdes Gouveia, and Enzo Mingione**. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994. 294 pp. \$40.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-7006-0660-2. \$17.95 paper. ISBN: 0-7006-0661-0.

esting and important issues become comparative ones: Why are some food industries more globalized than others? Why are some communities able to resist the incursions of ConAgra and Philip Morris more than others? Why have some countries benefited from the globalization of agriculture while others have suffered? Why are some global food companies more responsive to the demands of labor than others? Why are developing countries like India self-sufficient in agriculture while Ethiopia is not?

These important questions for both theory and policy cannot be answered by falling back, as the authors too often do, on sweeping assertions about the growing and "contradictory" powers of capital over labor. Globalization is not a uniform process, and its causes and effects are inherently neither good nor bad. Rather, they become so in particular social, economic, regulatory, and political contexts, and while due deference to the ambiguities surrounding these issues—that TNCs can help and hinder, that the nation-state is both more and less important in a global economy—is provided in the introduction, the substantive chapters do not adequately unravel or clarify them. Moreover, despite what is implied by its catchy title, by the book's end we actually know very little about how (as opposed to why) given TNCs have come to influence the food and agriculture industries over the last 500 years beyond what could have been anticipated by world-systems types. More systematic evidence to substantiate the assertions