

*Regionalism, Multilateralism, and the Politics of Global Trade*

edited by Donald Barry and Ronald C. Keith

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999, Pp. xviii, 302, Index.

This book, which gathers together papers presented at a conference held at the University of Calgary in October 1997, provides a good overview of regionalism and multilateralism, the two seemingly opposing political forces shaping the world trading system in time of increasing globalization. It makes an important contribution to the ongoing debate about whether regionalism is supporting or undermining the global trading system. While written before the WTO Ministerial Meeting late last fall, it is also useful background reading for anyone trying to understand the underlying forces and interests that prevented an agreement from emerging in Seattle to embark on another global round of multilateral trade negotiations.

The introductory chapter by Donald Barry and Ronald C. Keith sets the stage for the rest of the book, nicely laying out the main themes and issues to be explored. The body of the book includes: general chapters on regionalism and globalization; more specific chapters on the European Union, the NAFTA, and APEC as concrete examples of regional agreements; chapters on interregional relations between the EU and the United States, between North America and Asia, and between Asia and Europe (the so-called Asia Europe Meeting); and three chapters examining the implications of regionalism and multilateralism for Canada. The final chapter by Charles Doran does a very good job of pulling together all the main conclusions of the other chapters. Indeed, the introductory and concluding chapter are so complete that the lazy or busy reader need not read the whole book to pick up the most important points made at the conference

and to see them put into a broader perspective.

While all the chapters of this book were of high quality, the chapters by Robert K. McCleery on the political economy of NAFTA expansion, by Carolyn Rhodes on the relationship between the European Union and the United States, and by Ronald C. Keith and Patricia L. Maclachlan on Canada's APEC policy deserve special mention. The McCleery chapter, which is more quantitative than the rest of the book, is more likely to be appealing to economists. Its quantitative nuggets include interesting data on trade flows in the Western Hemisphere and a useful table summarizing the estimates of gains from alternative regional trading arrangements in the Western Hemisphere. The Rhodes chapter, which is apt to be of more interest to political scientists, examines the evolution of the most important bilateral relationship in the global economy that between the EU and the US. It underlines the tensions that have developed as leadership in the global economy has progressed from US hegemony to US-EU bipolarity and describes the efforts to resolve bilateral issues through such institutions as the grand-sounding, but relatively modest, Transatlantic Economic Partnership. The chapter by Keith and Maclachlan does an admirable job of explaining the unique Asian character of APEC that makes it so inscrutable compared to more traditional regional organizations.

This book will be of interest to economists, political scientists, lawyers, public servants, and laypeople concerned about trade policy, trade law, and international relations.

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