

Book Review

Globalization and the Economic Consequences of Terrorism

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*Martell, L. (2016). The sociology of globalization. New York, John Wiley & Sons.
Globalization and the Economic Consequences of Terrorism*

Brenda Lutz & James Lutz

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Over the recent years, globalization has triggered a hot debate within the academic circles. While some voices emphasized its positive benefits for under-developed nations, others exerted a radical criticism on globalization as the axis of all maladies.

In this context, Brenda & James Lutz present a recently-published book, which theories on the economic consequences of terrorism in a hyper-mobile and globalized World. The main goals of this work are oriented to respond to what extent terrorism affects or potentiates local economies in the targeted countries. The introductory chapter is fully dedicated to defining terrorism, as well as its effects. One of the most frightening aspects of terrorism relates to the “randomness”, which means the possibility that anyone can be a future victim of terrorists, anywhere and anytime. The different chapters are organized to test empirically the original hypotheses stated in the introductory section. Terrorism operates within the combination of five tactics: attrition, intimidation, provocation, spoiling and outbidding. While attrition refers to the possibility of articulating political violence when the government is weakened, intimidation consists in captivating the attention of a whole portion of publics to introduce a message that undermines the credibility and legitimacy of the government. Provocation, rather, signals to the tactics often followed by governments to exaggerate the effects of attacks. Lastly, spoiling and outbidding decline negotiations for peace once the violence emerged. The main thesis in this book is that globalization has introduced some economic interactions (among nations), which results in a climate of prosperity. Meanwhile, the derived uncertainty and social frustrations very well pave the ways for the rise of violence responses and terrorist hot-spots. This violence may be directed against ethnic minorities or against the government, Lutz & Lutz accept.

As the previous argument given, the second chapter gives further details on sampling, as well as the methodological debate respecting the key indicators of the research. Through different databases

and indexes, authors explore the connection between globalization-tourism and terrorism (Global Terrorism Database). Each database has its own weaknesses and strongholds.

The third chapter explores terrorism in Latin America and Caribbean nations; a region that faced the virulence of different cells and terrorist attacks. From El Salvador to Colombia, the left-wing organizations appealed to the political violence as a form of vindication. As in the earlier chapters, Lutz & Lutz review in depth the levels of globalization as the key-player towards terrorism. Although the first wave of globalization started in 1880, no less true was that the North America free trade (NAFTA) resonated negatively in some agrarian communities located in Mexico and Colombia, among others. The number of foreign investments (through tourism) increases while the terrorist incidents duplicate, but it paradoxically generates a decline in the domestic revenue.

Complementarily, the fourth chapter discusses the correlations in the Middle East and Africa with similar results. Terrorism works as a counter-reaction to the liberalizations of economy accelerating conflict and violence as counter-reactions to the economic decentralization.

The next chapters (fifth and sixth) inspect the action of radical cells in Asia, Oceania and sub-Saharan Africa. Lastly, the seventh chapter unveils the question of ideology in West Europe and North America. Anarchists and left-winds groups are affiliated to an anti-capitalist culture, which historically opposed to free trade and the liberalization of the economy. However, this confrontation decreased once the Soviet Union collapsed. Unlike the other chapters, Europe and North America reveal contradictory and misleading results, revolving around mixed patterns. In some respect, those countries less integrated into global powers went through new forms of incidents in the next years. However, at a closer look, these incidents were not associated with the levels of globalization. Secondly, after the 2000s, some industries as tourism and hospitality were particularly unaffected in developed nations, while in peripheral countries the industry faced serious harms. This suggests that since larger countries produce more goods, which leads towards a self-sufficiency, it is not surprising that the effects of terrorism are notably mitigated. This is the case of France, Belgium and England.

The final chapter holds that the measure or correlation of globalization and terrorism seems at the least controversial and variable but promising for the years to come. Higher levels of globalization are associated to more terrorism in some periods or regions, while in others –like Europe- the association is in reverse.

Far from being determinant, the obtained outcomes show serious limitations in Lutz and Lutz's research. At a first glimpse, it is hard to determine the virulence of terrorist cells through indicators as the number of injuries, casualties or terrorist attacks. Secondly, as Luke Martell (2016) puts it, far from being homogenous globalization has different impacts depending on the contexts. There is nothing like a globalized economy or country. Within the US and Europe, there are many rural areas which still remain inexpugnable to globalization, whereas many global cities as New Delhi, Johannesburg, Rio or Buenos Aires are located in developing economies. Lutz & Lutz should think twice about this issue in their next approach. Quite aside from this, there is a connection between terrorism and tourism which merits to be studied, as authors eloquently suggest.