

Globalizations: The Shape of Things to Come (a synopsis)

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Posted to The World Orders Forum: 5 February 2025

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My new book, [*Globalizations: The Shape of Things to Come*](#) published on February 5, 2025, explores the driving forces behind global history and politics. It is structured around three main themes: war and peace, focussing on the case of Ukraine and the OSCE; political economy and the drivers of historical change; and political theory, including justice, democracy, and global agency and institutions. The book stresses future orientation, emphasising how past and present developments influence possible futures and the role of learning in shaping those futures. A central theme throughout is reflexivity – the idea that human actions and interpretations shape history in open systems characterised by uncertainty. By engaging with historical and theoretical perspectives on recent world history the book aims to provide insights into the shape of things to come, not only in terms of acknowledging the uncertainties of historical processes – which nonetheless can to a certain degree be anticipated – but also of advocating for transformative possibilities.

The analysis of war and peace is particularly crucial in understanding the effects of the globalization processes of the past few decades. Hence, the war in Ukraine too is examined not just as a regional conflict but as part of much broader global dynamics. The book critiques deterministic approaches that assume an inevitable clash between great powers or power blocs and instead explores alternative security arrangements that could lead to more stable and cooperative international relations. The lessons of the Helsinki process and the OSCE are revisited to demonstrate how past diplomatic efforts can inform contemporary security thinking and peace efforts. The discussion highlights the dangers of self-fulfilling prophecies in world politics, where assumptions about an adversary's intentions shape policies that make those assumptions come true. Reflexivity is evident in how different actors anticipate each other's moves, often reinforcing cycles of conflict and mistrust. The book

critiques the Western narrative that assumes moral superiority and justifies interventionist policies while fostering mutual distrust with Russia.

The future-oriented analysis in the first section underscores the need for new security architectures that can prevent further escalation and ensure long-term stability. It also raises questions about the long-term viability of military alliances such as NATO and their role in shaping global security in the 21st century. The second section on political economy delves into the structural forces shaping global history, particularly economic trends and crises. In this section, I critique the dominant neoliberal framework, arguing that economic stagnation, rising inequalities, and financial instability are not anomalies but symptoms of deeper systemic issues. The book draws on multiple economic theories, including post-Keynesian, Marxian, and Minskian perspectives, to analyse how crises emerge and evolve. My argument is that economic downturns, financial instability, and geopolitical conflicts are interconnected, creating cycles of growth and decline that shape globalization in complex ways. Reflexivity plays a crucial role also here, as economic actors – governments, corporations, and individuals – respond to perceived trends, influencing the trajectory of the global economy. The financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath serve as a key case study, demonstrating how economic policies and financial structures interact to produce systemic vulnerabilities. The book also examines the COVID-19 pandemic as an economic crisis, showing how global interdependencies shaped the responses and consequences of the crisis. The analysis emphasises that economic transformations are not merely technical but involve ideological struggles and policy choices that shape the future.

Future orientation is the most important theme of the overall analysis, as the book also discusses possible scenarios for the 2020s and 2030s. It warns of the risks of repeating past mistakes – not only excessive reliance on financial markets and austerity policies but also policies that generate tit-for-tat responses and security dilemmas – and advocates for global Keynesian reforms to ensure sustainable and equitable economic growth. The book also considers alternative economic models that could address systemic vulnerabilities, including cooperative and solidarity-based economies, and explores the role of global institutions in regulating and taxing economic actors to promote more just and sustainable outcomes.

The final section addresses normative questions about justice, democracy, and the role of civil society in shaping global governance. It critiques existing models of global governance that prioritise market efficiency over democratic accountability and social justice. The book proposes alternative frameworks based on democracy and global political cooperation. One of the central arguments is that justice is historically constructed and shaped by economic and political structures. Many of our moral disagreements arise from conflicts between two or more of these models of justice. My analysis of global justice theories highlights how different models of fairness – whether liberal, Marxian, or social democratic – can be assessed. I develop an argument in favour of the relative priority of democracy over justice. This implies, however, a commitment to transform the structure of global institutions and the characters and powers of actors to reduce powerlessness and vulnerability. In other words, the recognition of the relativist nature of struggles between models and sentiments of justice gives rise to a quest to democratise systems of global governance.

In the book, I also discuss Samir Amin's idea of the fourth international and suggest instead the idea of a global political party as a transformative force capable of reshaping global governance. Drawing on historical examples of transnational movements and parties, I examine the potential for a democratic and pluralist global organisation that could coordinate efforts to create more adequate global institutions in terms of rational economic policy, social justice, sustainability, and peace. These discussions highlight the limitations of existing institutions such as the United Nations and the challenges of achieving meaningful reform in a fragmented international system. The role of civil society movements is examined as both an opportunity and a limitation, as grassroots activism can push for change but often lacks the institutional mechanisms to implement systemic reforms. The book suggests that global governance structures must evolve to accommodate new forms of democratic participation and accountability, recognising the interconnected nature of global risks. While humanity's existential risks can be resolved, history is always open and no solution is final.

My discussion in the final chapter of the future of universities is equally relevant in the context of globalization, as knowledge production and dissemination play a crucial role in shaping public discourse and policy decisions. A key critical point is that the increasing corporatisation of higher education, which prioritises profitability and market-driven research over critical inquiry and social responsibility, is detrimental to the collective learning of humanity. Thus, I argue for reorienting universities toward their historical mission of fostering independent thought, critical analysis, and interdisciplinary collaboration. The analysis includes proposals for new arrangements of metagovernance that could support a more democratic and inclusive model of higher education, emphasising the need for academic institutions to engage with global risks and issues in a meaningful way.

Throughout the book, the central themes of globalization and political economy guide my analysis of the drivers of world history. By critically examining past and present developments, we can anticipate and shape alternative futures. The point is, however, that history is not deterministic; it is shaped by human agency, learning, and institutional structures. The book calls for a shift in perspective through the concept of reflexivity – from passive observation to active engagement in shaping the future. In the book, I highlight time and again the role of intellectuals, policymakers, and civil society in envisioning and realising alternative possibilities for global politics and the world economy. By understanding the dynamics of history through a reflexive lens, we can work towards emancipatory global futures even under the current circumstances that appear to foreshadow a global catastrophe. The shape of things to come is not predetermined but depends on collective choices, institutional arrangements, and the capacity for critical learning and transformation.

The chapters in this book, except for chapters 3 and 6, were originally published in the journal *Globalizations*. Previously, chapter 3 has been available only in Japan and chapter 6 in Finnish. The book comes with a new introduction (the next-to-final version is available [here](#)), which develops the themes of this blog much further. I hope and believe that the book as a whole is much more than the sum of its parts.