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Globalization: Towards State Failure or Security Community?

There is an intense academic and political debate on the effects of globalization for domestic and interstate peace. The intellectual starting-point of this project was an attempt to systematically contrast a liberal and a structural (globalist, dependency) model of globalization. Whereas the liberal model posits that economic interdependence promotes economic growth and democratization and (through both these intervening variables) domestic and interstate peace, the structural model sees economic interdependence as slowing growth, eroding democracy, increasing inequality, and promoting social strife and rivalry. These two models have been investigated at several points, with a concentration on the effects of democracy and the links between economic integration, growth, and peace. In his MA thesis (and later in his doctoral work) Havard Hegre has devoted his attention mainly to interstate conflict, while the work of de Soysa, Ellingsen, Gates, Gissinger, and Gleditsch (and also the joint work with Hegre and these authors) has focused on domestic conflict. Most of the studies have used trade interdependence and foreign direct investment as the main measures of globalization, with some attention to the spread of information and communication technology. Most of our work has been of a quantitative nature, with some attempt at formal model-building, particularly in Hegre's more recent work.

Generally, we find more support for the liberal model than for the structural model, both for internal and external conflict. In particular, economic development appears to be a strong force for peace, and the liberal model works much better for developed countries than for poor countries. We find some evidence for increasing inequality as a result of globalization but little evidence for major violence resulting from the inequality. It is possible that globalization may result in lower-level violence and as part of the work we are now doing for the World Bank we are pursuing this issue and building a new dataset on lower-level violence for the period 1946-2000.

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