

Book Review

David A. Gantz, *Liberalizing International Trade after Doha: Multilateral, Plurilateral, Regional, and Unilateral Initiatives*, New York, USA, Cambridge University Press, pp. vii–376 (2014) ISBN 9781107476585, £25.99.

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The book, providing a broad analysis of trade liberalization initiatives from the inception of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to 2013, is essential reading for trade lawyers, researchers, and students alike who are interested in getting a glimpse of the future directions for trade liberalization. The book attempts to ask and answer the following key question: What are the alternatives to trade liberalization in the WTO system?

The author rightly starts his book with the statement that the WTO's Doha Development Round is effectively dead. Although this view seems pessimistic, it is unfortunately accurate. Many reasons explain such pessimism. Nearly fourteen years have passed since the launch of the Doha Round, but there is no end in sight. Perhaps, the WTO is the victim of its own success. The WTO has been effective in reducing trade barriers over the years, expanding the coverage of topics, and adding important new members such as China and Russia. The trade regime seems to be evolving from leadership by principal trading-powers to wider participation and a more balanced reflection of interests from both developed and developing countries. All these developments complicate trade negotiations. In addition, the "single undertaking" approach adopted in the Doha Round hinders the ability of WTO members to reach agreement expeditiously.

The book is well-organized and coherent. It begins with an overview of the GATT/WTO system evolution. There is an extensive volume of literature on this aspect. The book makes a new contribution by analyzing different directions in which trade liberalization is taking place, including multilateral, regional, and unilateral approaches. For those who believe in multilateralism – as I do – the directions seem confusing. For so many years, the WTO has been the pinnacle of trade liberalization. To aid in the analysis, the book also presents specific case studies.

The book is organized broadly into three sections. The first section sets out a basic framework useful for those unfamiliar with the topic with the discussion of the GATT/WTO system and the causes of the failure of the Doha Round; the discussion is approached from legal, economic, and political perspectives.

The second section examines specific cases and models and highlights some of the critical issues in the trade liberalization debate, including market access for developing countries, the positive and negative effects of trade liberalization on the environment (fisheries and trade in environmental goods), and plurilateral agreements (GPA and ISA).

The third section provides extensive analysis of regional trade agreements (RTAs) such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The author analyzes key topics in RTAs such as investment, intellectual property, and labor and environment. The third section also examines unilateral initiatives to increase market access and trade liberalization.

Based on the analysis in sections two and three, Professor Gantz proposes possible developments toward greater trade liberalization at the multilateral, regional, and plurilateral levels. Professor Gantz further sets out timetables for the conclusion of multilateral, regional, plurilateral, and unilateral trade liberalization initiatives. The timetables are somewhat reasonable as timelines could be altered to meet changes in trade negotiation outcomes.

The strength of the book stems from its straightforward language that can be easily understood by both experts and laymen. In addition, the book provides a fascinating narrative of the state of play in trade negotiations on multiple fronts and the alternative approaches taken by many countries. However, this state of play comes with a caveat. The proposals highlighted in the book can become outdated over time and thus the analysis can be more or less correct in the future. The book refers in varying degrees to trade initiatives in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The book overlooks the Middle East an important region economically and politically. Arab countries have adopted the strategy of economic integration and engaging in word trade. The author lays out the multilateral, regional, plurilateral trade initiatives but does not determine clearly where he stands for among all these initiatives. It is not clear whether the author see regional trade initiatives as a preferred alternative to multilateral trade negotiations.

The goal of the book is to provide a general analysis of trade negotiations to facilitate trade liberalization, a goal which the book has successfully met. In 376 pages, the book covers nearly every major trade liberalization initiative and provides clear analysis. Overall, the book is an academic piece meant to engage trade and non-trade experts in a lively intellectual debate over the future of trade liberalization.