

Abstract for “What is the Common”

Global interconnectedness, often termed *globalization*, is a defining characteristic of our time. The connections between geographically diverse places take the form of *flows*, for example: flows of goods, flows of information and flows of people. These connections not only bring the world closer together, but also increase global consciousness of the world as a whole.

Of the many characteristics, facets and flows associated with contemporary globalization, international trade (excluding services for the purposes of this study) occupies what could be considered a privileged position. Many, if not most, of the organizations that govern international flows are primarily focused on the flows of goods, services, capital, e.g. the WTO, IMF and World Bank. Given the norms espoused by the current, dominant global powers, i.e. capitalism, liberalism, free trade, etc., it comes as no surprise that these institutions address and facilitate International Trade (IT), in contrast to the international movement of people (IMOP). The implication of this is that alternate norms to the "most visible," or dominant, norms could be at work within a given discourse, especially when the dominant norms are institutionalized to apply more to one ontological category, or international flow (in this case trade), than another (the movement of people). In other words, dominant norms are perhaps not the *only* norms that influence globally dominant discourses, institutions and practices.

Trade is generally regulated by the structure within which it flows; people move across borders often even in spite of regulations and policies. The commons that is our world, exists simultaneously at many levels, interacts, co-operates, competes, wages wars, brokers' peace, regulates, liberates, helps, hinders, and weaves the tapestry of our daily lives. Understanding two of the most important flows - trade flows and flows of people, is a small step towards understanding what globalization is, and hence, what the global commons comprises.

In order to investigate the norms behind the regulation of IT and IMOP, we are referring to the idea of principled beliefs, as defined by Goldstein and Keohane (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993). We are using two case studies to illustrate examples of these beliefs: the UK and US. The selection of case studies is based on criteria common for both states. Both are:

- states that both favor and promote liberal world views
- state that are members of regional organizations with similar functions (EU and NAFTA)
- states with leading roles in world politics

In light of the framework for analysis and selected case studies mentioned above, principled beliefs have been derived from statements of public officials (i.e. the policy makers and/or diplomats with institutionalized power to regulate IT and IMOP), as well as national strategy papers concerning IT and IMOP. Therefore, the norms found to justify regulation of IT and IMOP might be examined to see if the normative justifications for regulation differ between the two. This study will seek to illuminate whether such differences exist. In other words, the question this study will seek to answer is: *Is there a disparity in the norms justifying the regulation of the international trade and the international movement of people?*