The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy *by Kenichi Ohmae*
(Harper Business, New York, 1990), pp.xv + 223, $US 21.95, ISBN 0-88730-473.7

In the preface to this book the author states that it starts out being about international business, then attacks bureaucrats in governments, and ends by describing the economic world towards which we are moving. In the epilogue he emphasises that multinational companies are not yet behaving like model global citizens; national borders are not yet really disappearing; governments have not yet learned to take a back seat; developing countries have not yet caught up with the West and the Far East; and the interlinked economy is not yet a reality, only parts of it being linked.

The book concludes by proposing a Declaration of Interdependence for the year 2005, noting *inter alia,* that the interlinked economy creates no absolute losers nor winners, because market mechanisms adjust the competitiveness of participating nations "rather fairly through currency exchange rates and employment". Nevertheless the forces at work are powerful; those who oppose them will be "toppled", be they individuals, companies, or governments. At the centre of the forces at work is the oversupply of industrial and primary resources due to the dispersion of technology.

The author is managing director of the Japanese office of McKinsey & Company, which holds the copyright of the book. He is a frequent contributor to *The Wall Street Journal,* and the *Harvard Business Review,* which published a series of his articles on globalisation. These became the basis of several chapters in the book. We have here therefore, the authentic voice of the managerial revolution of global capitalism at the end of this century, and its vision for the next. Its slogan could well be, "managers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your governments". The blurb on the cover puts this concisely, if crudely: "Ohmae has a message for governments . . . get out of the way".

The central thesis is the emergence of consumer sovereignty, the increasing dominance of consumers over companies and countries. Yet there is no documentation of this, no reference to the literature of the world consumer movement (which is voluminous), or what it thinks about transnational corporations. There is no reference to the attempts by the United Nations to develop a Code of Conduct for such corporations in relation to consumers, which attempts were sabotaged by organised international business. The word 'consumers' is not even in the index, let alone any reference to its history and its debates over the last 30 years. The central thesis of the book is not documented and does not stand up.

Further, the globalisation process is confined to the developed world of the now fashionable Triad, the USA, Europe, and Japan, joined by "aggressive economies such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore". There is little mention of the rest of the world, of Latin America and Africa, which are not growing but contracting, although they are interlinked with transnational capital, to which they are heavily in debt. There is no mention of the United Nations' documentation of the vastly increased inequalities between and within nations over the last three decades of globalisation.

Nevertheless, the book is entertaining in an engaging style, and plays well to its intended managerial audience. By far the best chapter is the one on the

foreign exchange empire, which has the ring of truth. We are told that it is now not just a means of financing economic activity, *but an end in itself.* In 1988 the total volume of international trade within the Triad was $600 billion *annually.* The daily volume of foreign exchange trading was also $600 billion! The greater the fluctuations, the greater the profit, as the buying and selling of money makes more money. This is now an *industry* of mammoth proportions.

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Inquiry and Change. A Troubled Attempt to Understand and Shape Society *by Charles E. Lindblom*
(Yale University Press and Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1990), pp.xii + 314, US$29.95, ISBN 0-300-04794-0.

"I cannot identify a single social science finding or idea that is indispensable to any task or effort" asserts Lindblom (p.36), specifically mentioning economics but referring as well as the more social of the social sciences like sociology and psychology. The social sciences have become familiar with such attacks since their prominence in the heady days of the student protests in the 1960's. Lindblom's criticism is a part of a new wave of discussion that came into the popular press in the February 3, 1992 issue of *Newsweek* in an article, Sociology's Lonely Crowd, playing on the famous book of that name. The *Newsweek* authors report "some critics believe the discipline has become as weak as the subjects of its research". Both sources are sceptical about the substantial contribution of the social sciences to practical affairs. An Australian contribution, Pusey's diatribes against economic rationalists in Canberra, would seem to argue that economics has too much influence on practical affairs! Lindblom's focus is on social problem solving: "A social problem arises only when people look at a state of affairs in a particular way: specifically with a desire for its improvement" (p. 4). This has typically referred to health and welfare issues like youth unemployment or aboriginal health. However new issues like communications policy would fit the definition just as well. In fact the communications revolution is seen as central to the problems identified with the social sciences: "the technological revolution in communications, in computation, and in the storage and retrieval of information places many analytical tasks exclusively in the hands of persons who can operate the new technologies" (p.9).

The essence of Lindblom's criticism is that wants, preferences, needs and interests are not accessible to empirical social sciences methods. They are constructed in public probing and inquiry rather than being given or fixed: "Inquiry will displace conventionally scientific investigation for another reason: ends as well as means call for choice" (p.10). He argues that the way such inquiry should proceed is "in a broad, diffuse, open-ended, mistake making social or interactive process, both cognitive and political" (p.7). The process of inquiry is, however, limited by the processes of socialisation which we all undergo which create perceived givens and opposing irrational values and goals. Lindblom describes this as an impairment and is highly critical of social scientists for celebrating the process of socialisation without criticising its reliance on "censorship, and deception that in turn promote ignorance" (p.71). Thus social