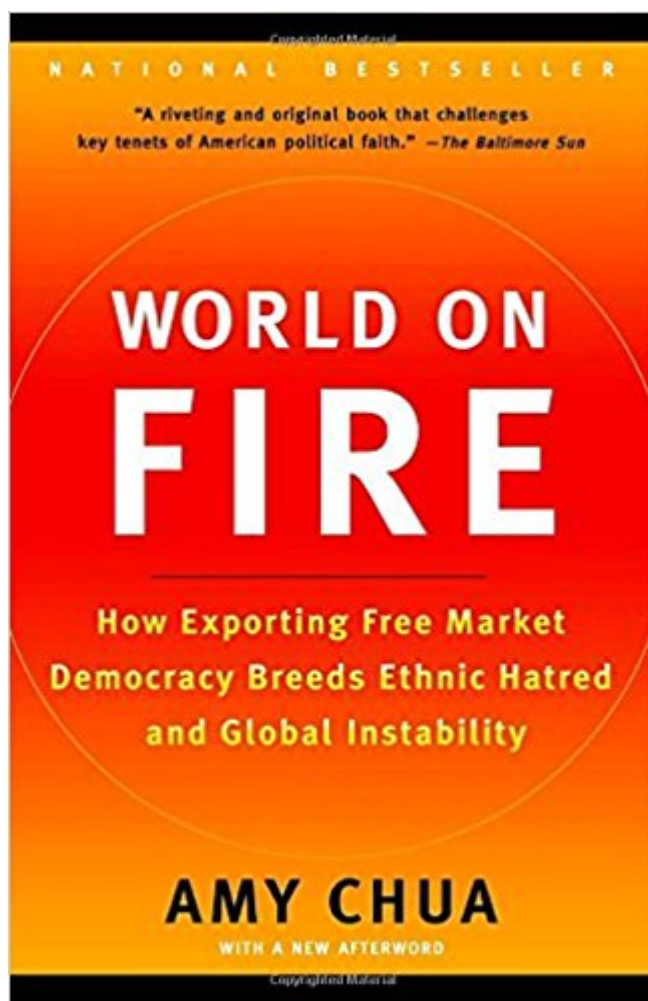


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World On Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred And Global Instability



Synopsis

The reigning consensus holds that the combination of free markets and democracy would transform the third world and sweep away the ethnic hatred and religious zealotry associated with underdevelopment. In this revelatory investigation of the true impact of globalization, Yale Law School professor Amy Chua explains why many developing countries are in fact consumed by ethnic violence after adopting free market democracy. Chua shows how in non-Western countries around the globe, free markets have concentrated starkly disproportionate wealth in the hands of a resented ethnic minority. These "market-dominant minorities" – Chinese in Southeast Asia, Croats in the former Yugoslavia, whites in Latin America and South Africa, Indians in East Africa, Lebanese in West Africa, Jews in post-communist Russia – become objects of violent hatred. At the same time, democracy empowers the impoverished majority, unleashing ethnic demagoguery, confiscation, and sometimes genocidal revenge. She also argues that the United States has become the world's most visible market-dominant minority, a fact that helps explain the rising tide of anti-Americanism around the world. Chua is a friend of globalization, but she urges us to find ways to spread its benefits and curb its most destructive aspects.

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Customer Reviews

A professor at Yale Law School, Chua eloquently fuses expert analysis with personal recollections to assert that globalization has created a volatile concoction of free markets and democracy that has incited economic devastation, ethnic hatred and genocidal violence throughout the developing

world. Chua illustrates the disastrous consequences arising when an accumulation of wealth by "market dominant minorities" combines with an increase of political power by a disenfranchised majority. Chua refutes the "powerful assumption that markets and democracy go hand in hand" by citing specific examples of the turbulent conditions within countries such as Indonesia, Russia, Sierra Leone, Bolivia and in the Middle East. In Indonesia, Chua contends, market liberalization policies favoring wealthy Chinese elites instigated a vicious wave of anti-Chinese violence from the suppressed indigenous majority. Chua describes how "terrified Chinese shop owners huddled behind locked doors while screaming Muslim mobs smashed windows, looted shops and gang-raped over 150 women, almost all of them ethnic Chinese." Chua blames the West for promoting a version of capitalism and democracy that Westerners have never adopted themselves. Western capitalism wisely implemented redistributive mechanisms to offset potential ethnic hostilities, a practice that has not accompanied the political and economic transitions in the developing world. As a result, Chua explains, we will continue to witness violence and bloodshed within the developing nations struggling to adopt the free markets and democratic policies exported by the West. (On sale Dec. 24) Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Globalization is not good for developing countries, insists Yale law professor Chua. It aggravates ethnic tensions by creating a small but abundantly wealthy new class and it's stimulating a new wave of anti-Americanism. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Amy Chua tackles tough topics typically avoided at cocktail parties such as...Why do American's love to mythologize the 'worldwide Jewish banking cartel'? Why are 6 out of the 7 richest new Russian oligarchs Jewish? Are Chinese students smarter than American students? Will the Chinese similarly out-compete Americans at jobs? Why do African-American families not stand a chance competing with white families on a 'fair and level playing field' in building generational wealth? Why did Hindii nationalists massacre between 1,000 and 2,000 Muslim civilians in Gujarat province in India in 2002? Why did the worlds' largest democracy then elevate the leader of Gujarat province to Prime Minister of India in 2014? Chua answers all of these questions with fast-moving, clear prose. She adds lurid storytelling, some of it personal, to flesh-out why America's greatest export - democracy - is causing us all to live in a world on fire. Tim

This book broaches the almost taboo question of the suitability of spreading democracy and capitalism across the globe as though the combination were gospel. The problems inadvertently caused by dramatic switches to free market democracy grow more glaring as globalization increases, and this book is a good start at getting me to learn and think about how to address these issues. Aside from being original and creative, this book has the properties of being well organized, being easy to read, often trading depth for breadth, and raising many more questions than it answers.

Contents: The first 50% of the book is a survey of various market dominant minorities within various countries, including the Chinese in Southeast Asia, the Tutsis amongst the Hutu, the whites in Latin America, the Jews in Russia, the whites in Africa, the Lebanese in west Africa. Chua sketches histories of how the minorities rose to disproportionate wealth and sometimes gives anecdotes for how members of various populations explain the phenomena to contrast the attitudes of the various ethnic groups. Then Chua goes on to describe the backlashes against free market democracy and their most obvious beneficiaries (the market dominant minorities), the backlash ranging from nationalization or government seizure of industries or properties previously owned by market dominant minorities to discriminatory laws to genocide. Democracy allows this government-sanctioned backlash to occur because the long suffering majority is eager to vote into office candidates who promise to "reclaim the country's wealth" (from the minority and back to, supposedly, the majority), running on slogans to the tune of "Kenya for Kenyans," "Serbia for Serbs," etc. This backlash is often disastrous economically (nationalized industries often do horribly in the hands of people who are suddenly supposed to run them but don't know how), politically (corruption), and humanely (by encouraging violence). Here she posits that nationalization of industries comes from ethnonationalism rather than socialism/communism. Although the USA is one of the main pushers of the free market democracy cocktail, Chua points out that the USA never had to endure such a prescription itself. Rather, everyone from the founding fathers onward had considered the problem of the relatively poor majority voting to "reclaim" the wealth of a minority and had put preventative measures in place, from poll taxes to literacy requirements. Furthermore Chua theorizes that, unlike Americans with the culture of the American dream, few people in developing countries believe free markets will allow them to go "from rags to riches." Thus the difference between poor Americans and poor non-Americans: unlike other poor people, poor Americans vote with the hope they will be rich one day and so tend to vote in ways that often seem counter to their own self interest. In addition the USA (along with China) is in the special state of having a market dominant majority instead of a minority, which is obviously much more stable in a democracy. Chua ends the book with several suggestions of how these issues can be addressed and includes the

example of Thailand, where Chinese were forcibly assimilated into Thai culture. She also throws in the case study of the USA as a market dominant minority at a global level, thus incurring all the consequences that come with that status, including inspiring feelings of envy, hatred, and humiliation (non-Americans hate the USA but still want to be US citizens). The flammable combination of free market democracy and market dominant minorities begs the question of why market dominant minorities exist in the first place. It seems like there are as many explanations as there are occurrences and Chua gives many histories but I am left wondering more about this question. Her concluding suggestions for addressing the problems of inequality across ethnicities are worth reading, and in the end one wonders if the USA isn't pushing free market democracy too quickly and thoroughly, and to its own detriment, and whether a more suitable political and economic model could be found.

Although critics of 'World On Fire' point out that there exist other reasons for inter-ethnic violence [other than rapid democratization in societies with market-dominant minorities], Professor Chua's thesis, and considerable research remains relevant and important. I am a late comer to the book, and wish I had read it years ago! She accurately predicted the results of recent rapid democratization in Egypt, which followed her logic, as an anti-Israeli demagogue (Morsi) won the popular vote. It is relevant even in ongoing conflicts such as that in Syria, where a hated minority (Alawite) holds on to power through the help of Russia and China. Her later books seem to have grown out of this one, and tried to answer the urgent voices calling for greater historical depth and breadth on this subject, which is in the headlines every day. It's also very well written....a page burner that can do more than enchant!

Anyone and everyone who has enough money to buy this book should read it. This is because anyone who reads and orders books online is, whether they recognize it or not, an "Ethnic Dominant Minority" and thus a key subject of this book. If you are from the U.S. you may ask "why do other countries hate us, but some still want to come live in the U.S.A.?" If you wonder why simple democracy isn't working in so many countries... just read on... it will be an eye opener. At the end of the book there are examples of what has been done to help alleviate this problem. It is not a simple problem and the solution isn't simple. But like story of the boy throwing away one starfish by tossing it back into the sea, every time we act to improve the lives of those who are not in our social circle we can say, "It matters to this one."

Professor Chua's hypothesis, that the sudden introduction of free market liberalization and democracy often serve contradictory ends and have unintended consequences is thought-provoking, well researched and cogently expressed. At times however, the book seems less like a scholarly examination than a polemic (endlessly repeated) and the solutions offered are so general that they lose potency. Despite these caveats, this is book well worth reading, as it presents a context within which to consider more specific development plans and longer-term intercession efforts.

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