

J. Baylis, S. Smith: The Globalization of World Politics – An introduction to international relations
(Oxford University Press, New York 2005)

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The third edition of “The Globalization of World Politics”, after the first one being published just four years ago, comes to nobody’s surprise – but to appreciation of a very wide academic community. Despite of the fact that the title includes a “catch-all-phrase” globalization, this book comes second to none in an overall pursuit of (researching and) teaching young people on the issues and paths our world is politicizing along.

Globalization is not only in the title and content of this extraordinary edition, but even more in the way it has been produced and used as a major text book for teaching purposes in 33 countries¹, including the US, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Brazil, India and numerous European countries. As for its contributors (35 acknowledged scholars), their background is in prestigious academic institutions from USA, UK, Australia, Canada and France, each with long-standing tradition of research in economics, politics, international relations, etc. Nevertheless, the two editors have to be mentioned separately: John Baylis is Pro-Vice Chancellor and Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Wales, Swansea (UK), while Steve Smith is Vice Chancellor and Professor of International Politics at the University of Exeter (UK). In four years time– following the first edition, they managed to grasp a continuous academic echo and countless remarks of anonymous readers, students and teachers, and produce “a workable” book in the contemporary teaching and research environment. Needless to say, the course of political developments on the world stage after 9/11 has significantly influenced the choice of areas to be presented, issues to be analyzed and theories to be tested – within the original framework: history, theory, structure and process, as well as selection of contemporary issues.

The substantial body of knowledge presented in “The Globalization of World Politics” (811 pages) is divided in five parts: The historical context, Theories of world politics, Structures and processes, International issues, and

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¹ Since its first publication in 2001, the book has been sold in nearly 100.000 copies – numbers hard to reach even in popular literature or music CDs.

Globalization in the future. For the purpose of helping the unfamiliar readers' to understand the very basic concept, here is an extremely condensed definition (or the phenomenon description) of globalization, provided to student-readers: "*A historical process involving a fundamental shift or transformation in the spatial scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across regions and continents.*"²

Even from such a short citation, it is evident that the central concept is being carefully polished to include:

- proper time dimensions (as well as the necessary distance),
- ever-changing characteristics of any phenomenon of social organization through various forms of communities,
- multi-purpose and multi-nature basis of contemporary political processes and links, where
- administrative boundaries are not boundaries at all, but at the same time allowing for
- a particular reconciliation space between hyperglobalists and sceptics regarding the choice between a fundamental shift (the demise of sovereign nation-state) or transformation (remaining geopolitical world order).

Of course, this was presented only as an illustration, without any intent to oversimplify the concept which is being thoroughly investigated and comparatively researched throughout the book, or to degrade the editors' efforts to have it framed from the historical, theoretical, structural and issue-based aspects.

Part One deals with the historical context of society internationalization and gives four separate time-frames of historical perspectives on world politics: from 1900 to 1945, from 1945 to 1990, the ending of cold war and the beginning of the war on terror.

Upon this overture, Part Two presents five main blocks in building the theoretical structure of International Relations. It is opened with Realism (the inter-war period 1919-39, e.g. H.J. Morgenthau), followed by Liberalism (opposition after the two wars, up to the cold war and 9/11; e.g. "Wilsonianism", E. H. Karr) while contemporary mainstream theories are being presented through Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism (since the mid-1980s, e.g. K. Waltz and R. Keohane, respectively). This is followed by the presentation of Marxist theories of international relations (mid-twentieth century, e.g. A.G. Frank, I. Wallerstein) and a newly added chapter on Social Constructivism, written by Michael Barnett (University of Minnesota), presenting a recent series of critical reactions to the mainstream theory (the 1990s, e.g. J. Ruggie, R. Ashley). Finally, Part Two concludes with a review of other important contributions to theory of International

² Oxford University Press: Companion Web Site-Flashcard Glossary at: www.oup.com/uk/booksites/politics

Relations, such as historical sociology, normative theory, feminist theory, post-modernism and post-colonialism.

Structures and processes in contemporary world are delineated in Part Three, presenting relatively stable and permanent features of world politics, as well as more enduring than world/global issues dealt with in the next part of the book. Such constant characteristics are presented through global security, international political economy, international law and regimes, contemporary diplomacy, the UN system, as well as the emergence and role of transnational actors and international organizations in global politics. The last chapter of this Part, written by Prof. Peter Willetts (City University, London), clearly outlines problems with the state-centric approach by (and not only in that way) introducing new actors in the system: transnational companies, liberation movements, non-governmental organizations, international quasi non-governmental organizations, etc.

Part Four is the most comprehensive one and takes up the largest part of readers' attention, with a sound selection of international/world/global issues of today, such as environmental issues (CFCs emission, exploitation of global commons, transnational regulation and over-exploitation, as well as their impact on current world politics), "development" of terrorism from a transnational to global phenomenon, nuclear proliferation and control, nationalism as ideology and movement, cultural differences and globalization, humanitarian intervention in world politics, European integration and regional co-operation, internet revolution, particular issues related to poverty, development and hunger, gender issues regarding violence, health and women's rights, concluding with a survey of specific human rights issues and the growth of the corresponding regime. The chapter on Global trade and finance, written by Jan Aart Scholte (University of Warwick, UK) is particularly illustrative in distinguishing general conceptions of economic globalization: a globalized economy is portrayed from the aspects of cross-border transactions, open-border transactions, transborder transactions, production and products, as well as transworld finance. Nevertheless, the author concludes that, after all, the state and global commerce show considerable mutual dependence and are not inherently confronted to each other.

The concluding Part Five offers two sets of reflections on the impact of globalization on world politics and international relations in the third millennium. One focuses the forms of political community emerging under globalization, while the other examines the typology of the existing world order. What has to be especially underscored is that both of the chapters give a round-up historical perspective over the aspects and in that way actually the whole structure of the book (which commenced with the historical context) is finalized.

A particular feature of this "publication" has to be emphasized. The hard copy of this publication is just one part to the whole – it is accompanied with digital version of(a variety of resources) guides, a glossary, review questions,

links to further readings and even, under the restricted access, power point slides to guide prospective teachers. Finally, case studies presented at the site (Kosovo 1999³, The Gulf war 1990-91 and Iraq 2003) can be very useful in learning how real life “fits” into theory and vice versa.

³ Regardless of our historical, geographical and emotional proximity to Kosovo, we are biased to note that all references for this case study originate from the Anglo-Saxon world, which is undoubtedly just a coincidence.