



Sacred Heart
UNIVERSITY

Sacred Heart University
DigitalCommons@SHU

Government, Politics & Global Studies Faculty
Publications

Government, Politics & Global Studies

5-2006

Confronting Globalization: Humanity, Justice, and the Renewal of Politics (Book Review)

Steven Michels

Sacred Heart University, michelss@sacredheart.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/gov_fac

 Part of the [Political Theory Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Michels, Steven, "Confronting Globalization: Humanity, Justice, and the Renewal of Politics (Book Review)" (2006). *Government, Politics & Global Studies Faculty Publications*. Paper 38.
http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/gov_fac/38

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Government, Politics & Global Studies at DigitalCommons@SHU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Government, Politics & Global Studies Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@SHU. For more information, please contact ferribyp@sacredheart.edu.

Wilkes) to journalism (Thomas Freidman) and those in between (Michael Ignatieff). Without exception, the essays are cogent and well written. However, the editors' emphasis on covering the breadth of border issues sacrifices depth on any individual topic. Fortunately the volume is structured in a way to provide the reader with a clear direction in which they can conduct a more thorough investigation into a particular topic themselves.

Barton Edgerton
(London School of Economics and Political Science)

The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology by Fred Halliday. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 374pp., £16.99, ISBN 0 521 59741 2

One does need to proceed with caution when reviewing a book by so knowledgeable a Middle East expert as Professor Fred Halliday of the LSE. Indeed, in his latest book, Halliday proceeds to analyse the entire gamut of Middle Eastern affairs, stretching from theoretical issues to country-focused area studies and so on. One must also appreciate the easy style of writing followed by Professor Halliday, a pattern by which even highly academic and intellectual matter has been conveyed in simple terms for the understanding of the common man. This book is divided into four parts excluding the introduction, which serves to provide a broad overview of the area under study. Part I is made up of two chapters dealing with the theoretical framework on which a study of the Middle East can be based. The author sought to analyse, not only the theoretical, but also the foreign policy initiatives that most Middle Eastern nations would be making as part of their existence as sovereign states on the world stage. Part II of the book deals with the history of the region and, in particular, the mechanics of state formation and associated political developments up to the present time. As a book written from a Eurocentric point of view, the author focuses on the interactions between Europe and the Middle East from the dawn of the modern era (1600

CE) onwards. Halliday, in a later chapter, applies this focus on to the Cold War period, long an area of specialisation for him. The last chapter in this part focuses on the post-Cold War 1990s, when the early euphoria at the disintegration of the Soviet Union gave way to what the author has designated as the 'Greater West Asian Crisis' (p. 131). Chapter 5 also encourages Halliday to expatiate at length on one of his favourite topics, namely, the crisis of Islam and the West, particularly after 11 September 2001. Part III, which forms the largest single section in the book, concentrates on what the author refers to as 'analytic issues'. These include war, state-sponsored ideologies, state survival and the international political economy of the Middle East. The author, drawing upon his great knowledge of the region, goes into some detail as regards each of these features, veritably skimming across the surface and picking up relevant issues at random. The conclusion, which tries to put the Middle East in an international perspective, also serves to divert attention from the generally held notion that the Arab-Israeli conflict alone is the major issue of the region. The author uses the conclusion to draw attention to the important fact that in the modern interdependent and interlocked world, conflicts and issues external to the Middle East have increasingly made their impact on the region: witness the effects that 11 September 2001 have had on Palestine, Iraq and by extension Afghanistan. This book would be ideally suitable for postgraduate researchers and those with a professional interest in the area.

Samuel Jacob Kuruvilla
(University of Exeter)

Confronting Globalization: Humanity, Justice and the Renewal of Politics by Patrick Hayden and Chamsy el-Ojeili. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 280pp., £50.00, ISBN 1 4039 4555 1

This latest contribution to Palgrave Macmillan's 'International Political Economy' series affirms that 'globalization stands as the insurmountable political and intellectual horizon of our age' (p. 7); nevertheless, the authors refuse to assume the

fact of globalisation. Instead, they aim critically to assess the actual conditions of globalisation, develop theories that are more inclusive and instructive and consider alternate paths to political liberation and social justice.

Noting its expansiveness and complexity, the editors see globalisation as 'most fundamentally about growing world interconnectedness and its social and political interconnectedness' (p. 2). Viewed in its proper historical context, globalisation means: more interaction and greater interdependence; a transformation of sovereignty; the emergence of a global system of governance; an alteration of the requirements of justice; challenges to political legitimacy; and the emergence of a global civil society. Critical theory, broadly conceived, is the preferred mode of inquiry, due to its analytical power and its ability to provide a normative vision for these crucial issues.

Although the introduction rather usefully summarises the recent literature in the area of critical theory and globalisation, the text might have been strengthened had the editors been able to situate it more precisely in the vast territory between neoliberalism and the orthodox Marxism they reject. A greater, and perhaps related, weakness is the contributors' lack of engagement with one another. The volume reads more like a collection of monologues than an exhaustive dialogue on the subject, an occurrence all too frequent in academic works of this sort.

Although the editors, somewhat refreshingly, take seriously the matter of politics and political agency, their introductory chapter ends with the banal hope that 'another world is possible' (p. 17). They seem indifferent to the fact that the present one is one freely chosen, and increasingly so, by its inhabitants.

Steven Michels
(Sacred Heart University)

The New Security Environment: The Impact on Russia, Central and Eastern Europe by **Roger E. Kanet**. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. 262pp., £50.00, ISBN 0 7546 4330 1

The New Security Environment offers several essays on the changing nature of security in Central

and Eastern Europe as well as Eurasia. Particular attention is paid to the legacies of the Cold War as well as to the power dynamics of American dominance and Russian decline. This edited collection is broken down into three parts. Firstly, contributors look at the role of the US and Russia in the new security architecture of the transatlantic area. Particular attention is paid to the nature of security after 11 September 2001 as well as dual enlargement. Secondly, contributors focus on the dynamics of security following dual enlargement with specific case studies, most notably the transition in Slovakia. These essays highlight the complex nature of military conversion following first post-socialism and democratisation as well as NATO membership. Finally, the contributors highlight Russia's regional security challenges in the 'new security environment'. The three sections come together to provide a detailed description of the challenges and opportunities facing the regions involved.

Having said this, there are several concerns with the book as an edited collection. Firstly, the essays included seem not to fit well within the editorial introduction and conclusion. For example, many of the contributors focus on the importance of regional institutions as important actors in the security dynamics. However, the approach projected by the context established by the editor focuses instead on a neo-realist understanding of states as dominant actors in the region. Secondly, the collections are quite descriptive and broad in their approach to the theme of security. However, there are some exceptions such as Ulrich's chapter on military transition in Slovakia. Finally, and perhaps most important, there is very little effort to define or conceptualise the 'new security environment'. Is it post-9/11? Or post-dual enlargement? Or both? Overall, with a few exceptions, this edited collection is an informative read, but not enlightening in its understanding of the changing nature of security.

David J. Galbreath
(University of Aberdeen)