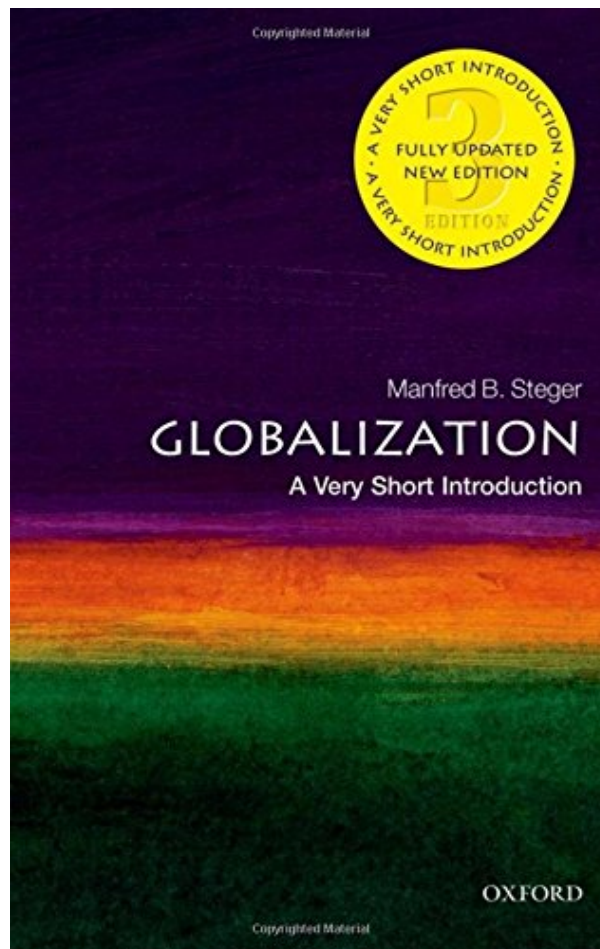


GLOBALIZATION: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION (VERY SHORT INTRODUCTIONS) BY MANFRED STEGER



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About the Author

Manfred B. Steger is Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa and Professor of Global Studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University). Steger has acted as a consultant on globalization for the U.S. State Department. He is the author or editor of twenty-one books on globalization and the history of political ideas.

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Globalization has become one of the defining buzzwords of our time--a term that describes a variety of complex economic, political, cultural, ideological, and environmental forces that are rapidly altering our experience of the world. In clear, accessible language, Manfred B. Steger goes beyond a narrow economic focus to cover all the major causes and consequences of globalization as well as the hotly contested question of whether globalization is, ultimately, a good or a bad thing. This new edition has been fully updated, incorporating all the major global developments in the past four years, including the 2008-2010 global financial crisis, the 2011 Japanese earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster, the 2011 killing of Osama bin Laden, the on-going revolutions in the Middle East, and the rise of social networking such as Facebook and Twitter. The book also examines political movements both for and against globalization, from WTO protests to the rise in global jihadism; considers such concepts as "Americanization" and "McDonaldization"; and explores the role of the media and communication technologies in the process of cultural globalization. Finally, Steger explains in accessible language the connection between economic globalization and multinational corporations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization.

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Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

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About the Author

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17 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Manfred Steger's concise examination of globalization - updated May 2013 edition

By The Guardian

This slim 137-page volume is penned by Manfred Steger, Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawaii and author of more than 20 books on the subject of globalization. He's also Research Leader of the Globalization and Culture Program at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, where he's Professor of Global Studies. The book was updated and revised in May 2013.

With these impeccable academic credentials, the author knows his stuff and manages to condense this vast subject down to 8 succinct chapters each focusing on a different aspect of the subject: the economic, political, cultural, ecological and (perhaps the most interesting chapter) ideological dimensions of the process.

In an early chapter Steger defines some common terms used in the debate and outlines the argument that 'globalization' is not really a new phenomenon but can be seen as part of a gradual process over the past 10,000 years, whereby ideas born in one part of the world (the invention of the wheel or of writing, for example) have over time been adopted by neighbouring societies and become at least widespread, even though their adoption might be prevented from becoming truly 'global' by the geographical remoteness of some regions. The perception of globalization as a uniquely modern phenomenon born of the age of passenger-air travel and global electronic communications is flawed, claims Steger: it is more useful to see the current phase of an increasingly interconnected world as just the latest in an inevitable process.

Where Steger's essay really scores is in its analysis of different types of globalism: 'market globalism' focuses on the economic imperatives to make everyone increasingly affluent 'consumers' sharing similar western-derived cultural values; 'justice globalism' constructs a vision of globalization based on egalitarian ideals and distributive justice - the International Court of Justice or the UN Declaration of Human Rights, for example - and 'religious globalism' as promoted for example by the Islamic Jihadists, who seek the establishment of a global caliphate founded on a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. There's also an interesting analysis of the rhetorical maneuvers performed by nationalist-populist reactionaries against these ubiquitous trends, who seek to promote the survival of the now largely redundant nation state concept, founded on territorial boundaries destined to be swept away for ever by the new paradigm of unitary global values and supra-national legal structures.

The book contains many monochrome illustrations, graphs and charts (for example per capita CO2 emissions, or global internet users as a % of the population by region) and overall it's hard to see how the content and organization of this short book might have been improved. The only caution is that as a university academic Steger's writing style is rather dry, so those seeking a more racy and engaging narrative might be best advised to look elsewhere.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Very interesting read

By Sussman

This rather slim addition carries a 'weighty topic' rather well. The author Mr Steger, the author is an eminent Professor of Global Studies at Melbourne Institute of Technology and he talks about how term came into being. As Mr Steger comments, a growing number of academics and political, commentators invoked the term to describe a number of changing parameters in economics ideological, ecological, cultural and political frames works. These aspects that have in recent decades be seen more than from the perspective of one nation's view point but rather as a global concern. What we get in this well thought-out and readable book is

Mr Manfred Steger's multifaceted development encapsulating global, regional, and local aspects of social life, in addition to explaining the various magnitudes of globalization. The book is neatly divided into sections explain one theme and or the other, and yes there is a plethora of `jargon' in the mix, so keeping a dictionary to hand maybe a good idea. However, what comes to the fore is Steger's premise that `Globalization' is not necessarily a modern age phenomenon but rather as old as the ability human beings have had for putting their thoughts into the `written word'. For me this was both a thought provoking and somewhat enlightening read.

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

uncharacteristically disappointing

By T. Stilwell

I have read several Oxford University Very Short Introduction books. This one was interesting but also disappointing as it was too brief and unnecessarily biased without supporting data.

Unlike Joseph Stiglitz or Thomas Friedman, this author defines globalization beyond economic forces briefly summarizing economic, political, cultural, ecological and ideological impacts of globalization. He identifies why these forces are important but lack equal impact or value. Oddly, he overlooks technology and the rapid pace of change. Sometimes he provides supportive examples and references. Too often, he makes unsubstantiated socialist rants never supported with examples or references. The sudden change in writing style is abrupt and difficult to overlook. Lastly, he fluffs nearly a third of the book highlighting a WTO protest in Seattle (inconsequential) and the War on Terror because of 9/11 (impact to banking felt world-wide yet undiscussed).

Although the author is clearly well-read, his work reads like an amateur that has limited travel to high society regions of English-speaking countries. He has limited understanding of life beyond a post industrialist democratic society that encourages free trade, education and scientific thinking. While he shares these values and would willingly promote democracy as an export, he also has a naive hippie agenda that claims we would all work really well together if only the bad capitalists were forced to behave. I doubt he has even chatted with citizens of developing countries (language barrier) in order to learn their point of view or view of themselves in history. He ignores what their recent opportunities were and how things have changed with the influx of foreign capital, supply chain extensions and free trade in the world trade network (1.5B newly employed). He naively assumes that they embrace all things Western without criticism and thus lose their national identity. While he admits that charity from modern civilizations to backward civilizations often fails because those in power (developing nations) usually redirect funds to their personal bank accounts, he neglects cultural norms that expect and reward that behavior. Rather than punish said leaders by freezing assets hidden in overseas bank accounts, extracting them for trial and punishment (Manuel Noriega), he prefers letting them keep their loot with the World Bank and IMF taking the fall by forgiving all debts and allowing such developing countries to simply rinse and repeat. He also has an irrational sense of global equality unsupported with equal norms in terms of standard-of-living, education, treatment of the environment, approach to dealing with disagreements or perceived injustice or expectations when working to earn a fair day's wage. If a developing country doesn't see fit to adopt modern boundaries for trashing the environment or educating labor or exploiting labor, should its citizens be cut off from world trade, be pressured with cultural change to adopt world standards or merely tolerated despite socialist whining about exploitation? He neglects to offer an opinion.

He identified a rise in NGOs and regional or global organizations but cherry-picked the ones to cheer for. Oddly, there is no mention of the WHO extending average life expectancy with vaccination and improved prenatal care or the Peace Corp providing disaster relief, free education, improved farming and husbandry, or distribution of medicine.

The author ignores evidence like world wars and genocides that strongly imply that nations allowed to each go their separate ways hasn't ended well for their citizens or strangers that they meet. He feels that GATT, The Hague, WTO and G20 exist solely to force "unlimited accumulation and consumption of material things" to all disguised as free markets and democracy. He also ignores freedom of choice with multiple rants against the supposed Americanization of other cultures cherry-picking examples of successful adoption of new ideas, products and services by foreign markets conveniently overlooking all failed attempts (India McDonald's frying potatoes in pork fat) or protectionist legislation to shield the creation of domestic competition (Chinese automotive or internet market segments). He also claims prejudice when countries invoke immigration quotas and ignores contributing factors (recession, illegal border crossing).

I honestly don't understand his White Guilt for the supposedly oppressed Southern hemisphere that he repeatedly hinted at but never substantiated in any detail. Southern nations are free to choose any form of government and free to trade with the world economy or not. If they choose poorly, are Western nations or businesses really exploiting them or simply allowing them to behave foolishly? If the same behavior occurs when trading or borrowing money from China or Japan, is it still exploitation? The UK borrowed heavily from the US to fund WWII and faithfully paid them back over 40 years. Why should developing countries be given a free ride?

I would have enjoyed it more had he attempted to address some of the obvious outcomes of globalization such as

1) redistribution of jobs across national borders in order to reduce costs. while this reduces costs for existing products and services, those who lose jobs must retrain and may be unable to rehire at the same earning power impacting their way of live and sense of happiness and success. are citizens that must repeatedly change careers still considered successful if they reboot themselves or only if they reboot themselves and continue to increase earning power? if market forces move your preferred career choice outside your nation, do you emigrate as so many others do in order to complete tertiary education? does your government owe you job security or should they merely not sweeten the pot for your employer by offering a tax break for outsourcing your job? do your ties to a community (home owner, married with children, employed by primary conomic driver of the region) matter as you lose your job and are forced to retrain? should your government help you retrain or should you expect it periodically and budget for it? if your government and culture do not provide career opportunities of interest, is it fair for you to seek new opportunity through emigration or are you disloyal? If you are unable to get rehired, are you an unfair social burden to the community or just unlucky but unwilling to migrate because the emotional cost (loss of access to family, friends) is too high?

2) free flow of capital across national borders can cause economic recessions. While the global financial crisis is in recent memory due to failures of due diligence by watchdogs, analysts, mortgage lenders and financial institutions, it has occurred previously during the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Asian Financial Crisis. Modern businesses with most funds invested may suddenly be unable to make payroll causing a chain effect. Should governments impose minimal behavior rules for businesses and financial institutions or allow free market to reign? Should government plan bailout strategies or is that merely encouraging future bad behavior?

3) national sovereignty now conflicts with global responsibility. Is it wrong for more powerful nations to step in and stop a genocide, civil war or war because it interferes with free trade and single source supply chains? Should governments impose minimal compliance standards for businesses to avoid negative impacts to the environment or are developing countries allowed to pollute just because they are poor?

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