

Editorial for Issue Three

This issue coincides with the 10th annual conference of the Global Studies Association (GSA), held on the 1st to the 3rd of September 2010, which the journal co-sponsored and organised. The conference examines the relationship, or, perhaps as some would argue, non-relationship, between International Relations (IR) and Global Studies, thus bringing together the debates in our previous issue on 'Globalisation and War' and the topics addressed in this issue. Explicitly addressing this relationship, the conference posed the question: 'Global Studies and International Relations: Complementary or Competing Paradigms?'

The conference was designed to probe the ways in which these rival paradigms seek to explain contemporary global dynamics in terms of overlapping political, cultural and economic interactions across different scales. The following questions were identified as being of central importance: Is the advent of Global Studies an extension of International Relations, or does Global Studies represent a new *episteme*?; can Global Studies challenge the traditional dominance of IR in both academia and policy making fields?; does Global Studies need to challenge IR, or do attempts to understand the interactions between local, national, regional, international, and global scales always need to proceed from (or relate back to) a foundation of territorial borders and thus state centrism?

Nation-states have commonly constituted the traditional unit and level of analysis in IR. As Leslie Sklair argues in the essays section of this issue, "despite some strenuous efforts ... International Relations has struggled to escape the limitations of state centrism" (p. 114). Common IR methodologies perhaps fail to fully get to grips with those processes that take no notice of territorial markers and state limits. Yet nation-states nevertheless remain dominant actors, possessing powerful agency within the global political. Indeed, it is arguably the increased focus upon (territorial) borders that has attempted to add content to the often empty debates that employ a terminology of 'transformation' in order to explain the state's encounter with border crossing processes, without explaining in any great detail the nature of the transformation and its implications for global politics. In terms of theoretical thinking about state, and accompanying borders, Beck (2002, p. 19), for example, has talked about a "globalization from within" – a globalisation within the state that amounts to a levelling of border hierarchies in the sense that state borders no longer necessarily function as the 'catch-all' border.

Certain IR scholars have argued that bordered space is ineffectual too, because territorial borders are an imposed, artificial construction. The territorial border is ineffectual insofar as it can never keep out the external world. However, borders remain. “Less than ever is the contemporary world a world without borders”, Balibar (1998, p. 220) argues, positing that “on the contrary, borders are both multiplied and reduced in their localisation and their function, they are being thinned out and doubled, becoming border zones, regions, or where one can reside and live.” Closely connected are the complex struggles between types of mobility control (it is the state border that actively facilitates different types of movement) and more fluid, nomadic forces that are resisting such control

How can such dynamics be adequately studied or theorised? Whatever the answer, these questions lead us to adopt a necessarily critical approach to both disciplines. The papers in this issue reflect this ambition to critically reflect on the nature of transnational, border crossing processes, and the interaction of these processes along different scales and levels of analysis.

In the articles section, Kenneth Houston looks at religion as a force in politics. In particular, he examines the ways in which the Roman Catholic Church has mobilised as a powerful international actor whilst simultaneously existing as a global, transnational community. In light of the recent ‘national’ scandals heavily publicised in the global media, Houston argues that the international and the transnational are strategically appropriated as power strategies. In our second article, Daniel Conversi questions approaches to the study of global processes through examining the meanings behind the term ‘globalisation’. He is particularly concerned with a lack of historical specificity within the study of globalisation, in the sense that the term globalisation can be employed to define any distant historical phenomenon. Conversi not only seeks to re-contextualise and re-locate the phenomena of globalisation and Americanisation, but to also use the latter to circumscribe the former. In doing so, the finite nature of cultural globalisation is identified. The last article by Jewellord Nem Singh examines the role the Chilean government plays in its copper mining sector. The profitable mining of copper contributes enormously to the state, so stability and continuity in the sector are of paramount importance. Using Chile as a case study, the paper outlines a number of challenges to the perceived failure of neo-liberal reforms in Latin America, including public-private partnerships in the sector; the role of foreign firms in the mining sector; and the success of state owned corporations competing alongside private companies.

In our essays section, David Chandler argues that the use of the international and the global has hindered any real understanding of the transformation of security discourses over the last decade. Particularly within the discourse of IR, security has been structured according to liberal binaries in which political communities constitute and thus secure subjects at either the state or global levels. Chandler thus proposes a new

'post-liberal' direction that sees the disappearance of securing agency itself. In the subsequent essay, Manzoor Ahmad discusses the US-led War on Terror in Afghanistan and focuses on the economic, social, and political consequences for the region. He analyses the role of Pakistan in the war and the implications for its domestic and foreign policy. In our final essay, Leslie Sklair questions the use of the term 'globalisation'. Sklair proceeds to show how transnationalism is a better way of analysing the contemporary world than what is offered by International Relations. Moreover, Sklair outlines three modes of globalisation: generic, capitalist, and alternative, and argues that capitalist forms of globalisation undermine the emancipatory potential of generic globalisation. Also included in this issue is an interview with the Australian political economist Kanishka Jayasuriya. Here Jayasuriya discusses his theories about the regulatory state, meta-governance, and what he terms 'accountability communities', relating each of these to the ongoing crisis of global capitalism.

There have also been some journal developments worth mentioning. We have been listed and archived in the Directory of Open Access Journals, which means that all past and future issues are now fully searchable within this database. Further details on this can be found on the journal website. We also welcome to the editorial board Amin Samman. His interests include constructivist political economy, historiography, and theories of crisis – interests that we are sure will contribute to the future direction of the journal. On that note, we can reveal here that the fourth issue will be a themed edition on 'The Idea of Crisis'. But for now, we hope that readers will find the present issue an interesting and stimulating contribution to discussions in IR, Global Studies, and beyond.

Anthony Cooper (on behalf of all the editors)
London, August 2010

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