

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2014. *Globalization: The Key Concepts. 2nd Edition (The Key Concepts Series)*. London, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Academic. 210 pp. Pb.: \$29.95. ISBN: 9780857857422.

The second edition of the book *Globalization: The Key Concepts* by Thomas Hylland Eriksen, professor of Anthropology at the University of Oslo, Norway, provides an overview of central aspects of globalisation. The book is part of Bloomsbury's series on *Key Concepts*. The second edition was published ten years after the first one; thus, it has been significantly updated and revised.

Globalization explains what globalisation is, does, and means on different levels and in different contexts. The purpose is to outline some of globalisation's main features, underline its local and nonlocal characters, point out different analytical approaches, and discuss some of its challenges, such as global risks and vulnerabilities. Nine chapters are named after the themes they explore *Disembedding, Speed, Standardization, Connections, Mobility, Mixing, Risk, Identity politics, and Alterglobalization*. The target group is students, and examples drawn from a wide variety of empirical fields vividly illustrate the points. Each chapter has instructive headlines, a concise introduction, a bullet-point summary, questions to reflect on and discuss in class, suggestions for further reading with a short description of each book, and a pleasing layout.

Hylland Eriksen is an internationally acclaimed anthropologist, a prolific writer and an eager commentator and academic celebrity in his home country, awarded for his relentless efforts to explain social complexities to a wider audience. As such, he is the right person to cut across established academic boundaries and write about complex issues in a simple, but not simplistic, manner. One example is when he explains that globalisation 'creates a shared grammar for talking about differences and inequalities. Humans everywhere are increasingly entering the same playing field, yet they do not participate in equal ways, and thus friction and conflicts are an integral part of globalizing processes' (p. 17).

As a book, *Globalization* is an example of the globalisation processes it explores, such as standardisation, mobility, mixing, disembedding, connections, speed, and simultaneity. Not only is it written by a Norwegian who did his fieldwork in Mauritius and now teaches Social Anthropology in Oslo, within an educational framework adapted to the Bologna standard that enables international comparison of education. The book is published simultaneously in London New Delhi, New York, and Sydney, in a standardised format, as part of a series on 'cross-disciplinary ideas across the Humanities and Social Sciences.' Moreover, with one exception, the bibliography consists only of literature in English, written by scholars from all over the world, but primarily affiliated with British and American universities, thereby reflecting the 'global dominance of English' (p. 87).

Globalisation is presented as a phenomenon that shrinks the world, but at the same time expands it because it makes us aware of differences. Hylland Eriksen emphasises the *glocal* character of globalisation, which is important because 'human lives take place in particular locations' (p. 174). A good example of this, which is used several times, is the way McDonald's has a global standard, but at the same time acquires a distinctively local

character in different countries. The author emphasises that the effects of globalisation are complex, not per se negative or positive, and have different impacts on people's lives. Special attention is dedicated to overheating (afterword), a metaphor for what happens when 'too many transactions are taking place at the same time,' i.e. exponential growth and accelerated change, which leads to a 'loss of overview and predictable outcomes' (p. 9).

In a pedagogical overview of key concepts, it is admissible to cut some corners, but some of the parts that deal with religion and globalisation are too weak. Relevant literature on religion and globalisation in the bibliography is virtually absent, and it is quite clear that religion is not Hylland Eriksen's field of expertise. Religion is arguably one of the phenomena most radically influenced by globalisation, and simultaneously an important factor in shaping globalised culture, society, and politics. In the book, however, globalisation's impact on religious development is presented only in passing, and mainly concerning Islam.

Statements such as 'some have turned to religion, thereby falsifying the secularization thesis' (p. 144) are both unsophisticated and questionable, and the terminology incoherent and sometimes misleading. One detail is that a *fatwa* is not the same as a death sentence (p. 125), and the author's use of the term 'Islamism' is not precise. Apparently, the author uses it to denote political Islam (as is common practice in the academic literature), but also other forms of Islam that in different ways have 'hard' symbolic boundaries, such as fundamentalism and Salafism. In any case, claims that 'Islamism' represents an 'antagonistic localism' (p. 168) and resistance against standardisation, are at best imprecise. If anything, the forms of Islam that are on the increase worldwide and which appear to be the 'Islamism' that the author has in mind, are generally reformatted, culturally and socially disembedded, identified by its adherents' calling for a global standardisation of Muslim practice, faith, and symbolic markers, and often in outright opposition to local Islamic traditions. Nevertheless, Hylland Eriksen is right to point out that the quest for purity and authenticity is a conspicuous feature of contemporary identity politics and that the polarisation of collective identities is an offspring of globalisation (*Chapter 8*).

In spite of such shortcomings, *Globalization* is a good introduction to the topic both for students and general readers.

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