

Interview – Stephen McGlinchey

Written by E-International Relations

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<https://www.e-ir.info/2018/12/29/interview-stephen-mcglinchey-2/>

E-INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, DEC 29 2018

As part of a series of interviews on *Broadening Engagements with International Affairs*, The ISA's Jamie J. Hagen interviewed E-IR's Editor-in-Chief, Stephen McGlinchey. In addition to his work with E-IR, Stephen is Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader of Politics and International Relations at the University of the West of England, Bristol. His most recent books are *International Relations* (2017), *International Relations Theory* (2017) and *US Arms Policies Towards the Shah's Iran* (2014). An excerpt of the interview is published below. The full interview is available on the International Studies Association website, here.

How does E-IR relate to more traditional platforms for engaging readers with scholarly ideas?

In our opinion, we complement all those traditional platforms – adding something while taking nothing away. So, we do not see ourselves as revolutionary. We think there should be a quality open access venue for authors, and therefore we offer one. Further, we think that open access should be *fully open* and done at no cost to anyone – including authors. If you want to read something, it should be point and click. Anything else is a barrier. If you want to submit your work for publication, we believe that you should be able to do so with no surprises or publication charges.

Typically, authors come to us as part of a wider publication strategy. Most of our authors regularly submit their work to journals and see publishing with E-IR as a way to present their scholarship in a different format. The audience you can reach via our platform is many orders of magnitude higher than any other in the field, and this is most attractive. When it comes to books, many of those who have authored, or contributed to, a book published by E-IR have had an experience where a prior book they published was not read as widely as they had hoped. This might have been due to the high price publishers often place on monographs/edited collections or that publishers rarely promote scholarly works much. So, those authors typically choose us a place where they can take some of their projects, some of the time, when they feel they have something that might sit well to a wider audience. And, this brings me back to my original point that we seek to complement traditional publishing and give authors (and readers) another option.

What has been some of the most popular content at E-IR?

Without doubt our most popular content has been our two textbooks, which were both released in 2017. The books were developed as part of our drive to create a 'student portal' which would be a *one stop shop* to get students apprised of the foundational elements of International Relations. The books form the basis of that project, and they sit alongside multimedia and other text-based resources that supplement them in a special section of the website. Together, the two books have been downloaded almost 200,000 times – which is a breath-taking statistic and a testament to the quality of the books and the efforts of all those involved. It is also rewarding to see that so many of those downloads were from developing countries, where often the price of a single textbook is too high. So, we're delighted that our open access mission seems to be working in that sense. Saying that, textbooks are a new endeavour for us, and the other areas of the website (such as our daily mix of articles, reviews and blogs) continue to be very popular.

Worthy of mention here also is our interview series. Here, we have not just been interviewing major figures in the field, but we have also sought out emerging scholars from a wide variety of backgrounds and areas – some whom

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are still doing their PhDs. A big part of why we do this is that we want to be a platform for each new wave of scholars. So, many younger academics get their first major exposure via E-IR and in return we are able to get to know them a little bit and to see where the leading edges and emerging trends are forming in the discipline.

How can folks contribute/participate if they're interested in being a part of E-IR?

There are, at any one time, around 100 volunteer editors who invest their time in one or more of our projects, and they come from all over the world. Most of our editors are working towards a master's or PhD degree and spend a bit of their time doing various editorial tasks with us, primarily to broaden their skill sets and meet new people. We have an open recruitment process for anyone who would like to volunteer. The result, I think, is that the more E-IR volunteers give of themselves, the more they take away from the experience. It's a place where people with a bit of initiative and drive really thrive.

Is there anything else you'd like to add about why you're excited about E-IR?

Over the 11+ years we have been online we have always worked hard to remain true to our core mission – to be the best online resource for students and scholars of international politics. This is a hard balancing act for an all-volunteer mission like ours. We don't have any institutional or corporate sponsorship – so everything we do has to be thought through carefully so we are able to deliver it within our modest means. This means there are some things we have been unable to do, such as produce audio and video content, which are too expensive for us (in terms of time and resources) to do to a high standard.

But, by remaining focused on the bread and butter of scholarship – text-based material – we are always excited about what we can do in that realm. In 2019 we will have hundreds of new articles to share with the world, many of those will be from emerging scholars, and we will have another bunch of edited collections and monographs coming out. Providing an open access platform for that material, and those authors, continues to excite us and engage our readers.