



Matthew Sparke



INTRODUCING GLOBALIZATION

Ties, Tensions, and
Uneven Integration



About the Author

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Uneven Integration

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Preface

This is a preface to a textbook on globalization, written in Seattle, on a Chinese-made computer, by an American citizen, who grew up in England, who first became interested in global ties thanks to a children's book about the British empire (Figure 0.1), who went on to be taught global geography at Oxford by critics of imperialism, where he was told he should get a "more global" post-graduate education by leaving the United Kingdom, who then earned a PhD from a Canadian university, who is now a professor at a US university, teaching about globalization to classes filled with a new generation of international students, who have themselves been promised a "global education," which is now measured by rankings of the world's "most global universities," which are listed like the ratings used to guide global investments in global corporations, which have created the globally competitive job market for which students seek globally valued knowledge, which is offered in globally circulated articles and books which, like this textbook, are written on computers made in low-wage factories, by young workers who never go to university, who as migrants from rural areas are often denied citizenship rights in the factory zones, whose exploitation is a major concern of global anti-sweatshop activism, which, ever since the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999, has made globalization the contentious issue that it remains today, and as such, a major focus of public debate, analysis, and, as this textbook also exemplifies, education.

One of the most common protestor slogans seen in Seattle back in 1999 was: "NO GLOBALIZATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION" (Figures 0.2 and 0.3). The simple point here was to say that economic forms of globalization, like transnational trade, ought to come with new political forms of global participation, that they should provide workers, environmentalists, and human rights activists as well as trade ministers with a democratic voice in the global rule-making process. Recalling the language of the American revolution – "NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION" – this was a demand for political representation and

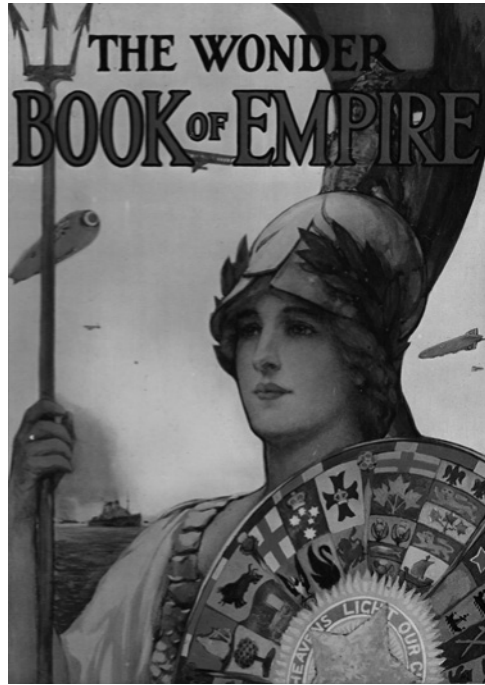


Figure 0.1 Front cover of *The Wonder Book of Empire for Boys and Girls*, ed. Harry Golding (London: Ward, Lock & Co, Ltd, 1939).



Figure 0.2 “No Globalization Without Representation.” Photograph by Matthew Sparke.

democratic participation on a new transnational scale. Intentionally or not, however, the slogan also underlined the fact that representations of globalization – of what it involves, who it effects and how it reorders societies – are just as much part of the globalization story as the processes of global economic integration. In other



Figure 0.3 “No Globalization Without Representation.” Photograph by Matthew Sparke.

words, how we represent globalization makes a difference because it shapes how global ties and tensions are understood, managed, and contested. This obviously makes writing a textbook on globalization a particular challenge. There is a need to represent the story of growing global integration as clearly as possible, but it has to be done in a way that also allows for reflection on the story-telling process itself – its interests, influences, and impacts all included.

Starting this preface with one long run-on sentence about the background of writing the book is just one way of provoking reflection on the story-telling process. Hopefully, it has already helped to make you reflect on how it is that you have come to be reading a textbook about globalization, and, perhaps, on how your ties to the technologies involved may link your own life with the lives of workers in far away factories. Maybe it has also raised questions in your mind about how your own perspective on globalization might be different from the perspectives of those workers. And maybe the information about my own background as the book’s author may have in turn made you wonder about how the imperial perspective indicated by that other older book – the one about the wonder of the British empire that was given to me by my grandfather – may have shaped this one.

None of the sentences in the pages that follow are as long and convoluted as the one at the start of this preface. The aim instead is to keep the writing simple so that the facts, theories, and debates about globalization are as easy to understand as possible. No assumptions are made about theoretical jargon that students are

already supposed to know (and there is also a glossary at the end of the book that provides definitions of all the key terms that are introduced in bold in the main chapters). Moreover, the distinct disciplinary frameworks, models, and assumptions of particular academic fields of study are avoided as much as possible in the hope that the writing will therefore prove more open and accessible to all. Nevertheless, none of this means that the expectations for student learning are somehow set low or that complex ideas and arguments are ignored. Thanks to the example and inspiration of my students at the University of Washington, I believe it is perfectly possible for undergraduates to grasp the complexity of globalization in ways that allow them to become active participants themselves in the debates over how it *should* be represented. Again and again, students taking my *Introduction to Globalization* class have shown me that they can understand and engage in some of the most complicated, challenging, and politically fraught debates over globalization just as long as the course material is introduced in a way that builds a structure for new knowledge as it moves forward. Inspired by the achievements of these students over a decade of teaching this course, I have tried to create a learning “scaffolding” in the same way here in this book: assuming no specialist knowledge at the start, but trying to enable increasing intellectual engagement and critical reflection as the chapters of analysis and argument proceed.

In what follows, each chapter builds on the one that comes before with a view to supporting increasingly sophisticated understanding and explanation. As a result, the chapters towards the end of the book (the chapters on governance, space, and health) are longer than those that come before, and they address some of the most complex ways in which globalization creates new tensions and divisions as well as new forms of global integration. The final chapter builds in turn on all of this analysis to present one of the most difficult learning challenges of all: namely, the challenge of what is to be done, of working out how we should best respond as students and scholars to the current forms of globalization. Here, we return to the question of representation once more, rethinking it in terms of how our ability to respond to globalization – our response-ability – relates back to how we represent our ties to the processes of global integration and how we therefore understand (or ignore) our global responsibilities.

In order to approach the complexities of globalization in a way that makes room for reflection on responses, it is vital to remember at least three key points. The first is that globalization has a long global history of antecedents that structure what different individuals and institutions can do. These antecedents of contemporary globalization clearly include the sorts of global integration (and division) associated with earlier eras of empire. The second is that today’s processes of global integration are by no means inevitable or unstoppable; that they can instead be reversed or reorganized and re-regulated, too. And the third key point (one that remains as prominent through this book as it is in the title) is that globalization has not simply created a single “level playing field,” or “flat world” or “one world” as some of the more gung-ho commentators have tended to suggest. To be sure, this is a very common representation of globalization, and it is also a very influential

representation in shaping global policy-making. However, it ignores far too much of what is happening. The new global interconnections of our world come with all sorts of inequalities and asymmetries of wealth and power. The ties have created tremendous global opportunities for connection, communication, and shared knowledge. They have made possible extraordinary growth in some places and amazing forms of global coordination between such places, too. Just visit a big global shipping port such as Singapore or Hong Kong, or spend some time in any global airport, and the sheer scale of global coordination is overwhelming. But this stunning world of connection and coordination has been built in such a way as to create terrible suffering, exclusion, waste, and violence at the same time. To play off the spatial metaphors in the titles of two books about globalization that have been popular among my students over the last few years, Thomas Friedman's assertion that *The World is Flat* needs therefore to be constantly contrasted with the observations about *Mountains Beyond Mountains* in Tracy Kidder's account of the obstacles facing the global struggle for global health.¹

Kidder's book is about the work of the physician and anthropologist, Paul Farmer, whose own writing about globalization and the recriminations of the world's poor and sick is especially inspiring to me. As the alliterations in his books' titles indicate – for example, *Infections and Inequalities* and *Pathologies of Power* – Farmer continually asks his audiences to remember how global health interconnections and global inequalities are related to one another; that they shape one another at the very same time.² He thereby draws on the arguments of his patients in poor countries such as Haiti to make the case that the whole history of global integration from the age of plantation slavery and empire through to today's era of debt, credit downgrades, and austerity has repeatedly involved division and dispossession, too. In this regard, another important inspiration for me in writing this book is a wonderful geographic history of globalization sketched by the Mexican cartoonist Rafael Barajas. Published under his newspaper name, *El Fisgón*, the book is entitled: *How to Succeed at Globalization: A Primer for the Roadside Vendor*.³ The point of this subversive title is to remind us once more that *history*, *power*, and, most of all, *location* matter a great deal in shaping who ends up “succeeding” at globalization. Against the view that the world is flat, we here are therefore again confronted with a critical commentary from the perspective of those who – like a roadside vendor in a poor country – find themselves on the impoverished sidelines of the so-called global level playing field.

Following Farmer and El Fisgón, this is a textbook on globalization that seeks to explain how we have come to live in a world defined by global integration and inequality at the same time. For the same reason, the book cover features no single satellite photo, global image, or abstract sphere representing a globalized globe, and the pages that follow offer no simple sound bites about a “borderless world.” The book spends much time addressing the increasing global influence of market competition on people's lives, communities, and governments, but it avoids suggesting that there is a single liberal-capitalist or market-based “end state” of globalization to which we are all inevitably heading. My hope is that the book will therefore better enable and encourage your own critical thinking rather than offer the final word on

whether globalization is good, bad, or ugly. It is a book that is meant to help you think and ask questions about connections and contradictions as well as learn facts. It is meant to help you become a knowledgeable participant in public debates over globalization. And it is also meant to show why the representation of globalization within these debates matters.

Of course, many people debate globalization simply because it is a fascinating focus for study and conversation. But, in the end, this book is written in the hope that it will help you to go beyond study, student conversations, and academic debates. Ideally, it will also allow you to join efforts to redefine and remake globalization in the world beyond the university. My own big hope as an author therefore is that by avoiding the language of inevitability, I have represented globalization in a way that makes such change seem possible. This is a much more wonderful global prospect than the children's book I was given about the wonder of empire. And, in the same way, I hope it leads to personal journeys for readers that are still more global and transformative than my own.

Matthew Sparke, Seattle

Notes

- 1 Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005); and Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (New York: Random House, 2003).
- 2 Paul Farmer, *AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Paul Farmer, *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
- 3 El Fisgón. *How to Succeed at Globalization: A Primer for the Roadside Vendor* (New York: Metropolitan, 2004).

Globalization

Chapter Contents

- 1.1 Introducing a World of Interdependency and a Word
- 1.2 The Networks of Global Interdependency

Chapter Concepts

Globalization needs to be understood on two levels:

- as a name for increasing global interdependencies
- as an influential key term in political speech.

Key Concept

The two main ways of understanding globalization need to be carefully distinguished. On the one hand, it is used by scholars to name the compound effects of intensifying and increasingly consequential global interconnections. By exploring these interconnections – including their component economic, political, legal, and ecological interrelationships – it is possible to understand how globalization has created global interdependencies that link the fates of people around the planet. On the other hand, we additionally need to understand how “Globalization” is simultaneously put to work as an influential codeword in political speech, a codeword that shapes policy-making and thus also alters the ways in which lives are actually lived globally.

1.1 Introducing a World of Interdependency and a Word

Why are you reading this book? It seems a simple question, and answers come easily to mind. It was recommended to you or is required reading for a class. It is about a topic that seems relevant, interesting or, at least, socially important. And, of course, you bought it. But think again. What actually enabled that simple purchase to happen? When you bought it, did you consider where and how the book was made: where the paper was made (China), where the typesetting took place (India), where the inks were manufactured (Switzerland), where the book was printed (Singapore), or who made the printing presses (Germans and Japanese)? You probably did not think of these things because the simple act of buying something usually conceals all this work. Likewise, when you buy a book you do not normally think about the global networks of air, sea, rail, and road transportation that put it in the bookshops; the oil and other forms of energy used in the process of transportation; or the global systems of electronic funds transfer that allow money to move from your account to the bookstore's account to the accounts of the publisher, to the pension plans, and the stocks and bonds into which people working for the publisher might be putting the profits.

As if the globalized ramifications of all the book-publishing economic links are not already hard enough to track, think about the still more complex political and cultural phenomena that have come together to make the *idea* of globalization seem relevant, interesting, and important. When did you first hear the word or some related term like the global economy, global system, or globalism? How many times a day do you see adverts and promotional publications that use images of the globe to sell things? Why do so many activists, economists, reporters, and politicians repeat the word "globalization" as if it is some sort of common-sense code-word that everyone just understands? What has made it the focus of street protests and widespread controversy across the planet? And on top of all that, have you thought about why your university or college has come round to the view that it is worth having a course that introduces globalization at a level that demands reading a book that is entirely focused on the subject? What has put globalization onto the academic radar screen? Why has it become relevant and interesting? What makes it important? And what, you should hopefully be asking yourself at this point, *is* it exactly?

In starting with this set of questions, these first paragraphs have already given a clue as to the way the rest of the book sets about defining and explaining globalization. Global interconnections of production, commerce, and finance like those that made your book purchase possible are key, but so, too, are the political and cultural controversies that have made globalization the latest big buzzword. Other academic surveys of globalization generally prefer to focus only on the interconnections themselves. Most scholars are wary of the way in which globalization has become so fashionable as an idea and so blurred as a concept (even if putting it in the title of a book or article helps draw attention to their work). For usually good

reasons, academics therefore tend to be suspicious about all the hype surrounding the term. One problem with this tendency, however, is that it treats the slogans, myths, and exaggerations about globalization as just irritants. By contrast, this book pays attention to the hype as more than a mere annoyance. The account that follows is still fundamentally organized around an analysis of real global interconnections. Each chapter is therefore focused on particular types of interconnection ranging from those of world trade and finance to those of law, politics, and health. However, along the way, the book also critically examines the buzz about globalization in order to underline how, as a dominant way of talking about and thinking about the world, the term has had its own global effects. The book as a whole, therefore, works with a double definition of globalization, a definition that addresses both (1) the actual networks of global integration and (2) the political and cultural concerns that have made “Globalization” a buzzword.

1.1.1 Globalization as integration

First of all, globalization refers to processes of economic, political, and social integration that have collectively created ties that make a difference to lives around the planet.¹ Another way of saying this is that *globalization is the extension, acceleration, and intensification of consequential worldwide interconnections*. These are interconnections that mean that what happens “here” (like you buying and reading this book) affects things over “there” (like the logging of trees in faraway forests). Reciprocally, the interconnections can work the other way round with events over “there” (like an environmental group’s campaign against deforestation) leading to effects “here” (like you wishing that the book was made out of recycled paper or available on the Internet). These sorts of two-way ties are often referred to by social scientists as “interdependencies.” It means that the lines of dependency run in both directions, even if, as is most common, the dependency is felt more strongly at one end of the connection (for example, amongst the different parties to disputes over logging) than at the other (amongst readers of a single book). Whether or not they are felt or even noticed, though, these sorts of interdependencies are creating a world where, despite huge inequalities in life chances, people’s lives are being increasingly bound together.

As we shall see in Chapter 3, the capitalist system of economic development has always depended from the sixteenth century onwards on forms of long-distance interdependency. Indeed, capitalism is generally understood to have begun through the gradual incorporation and capitalization of extensive pre-capitalist trading networks. From these early developments in the sixteenth century, the webs of economic interconnection have grown widely and deeply in terms of both their geographical scope and societal significance. The linkages have nevertheless always expanded *unevenly*, initially leading to economic growth in just one part of the world (Europe during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries) and then in others (the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also

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parts of Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, too). Sometimes, most notably in the period of European empire building in the late nineteenth century, the global ties were very strong and had huge day-to-day impacts. Indeed, by the start of the twentieth century, global trade was so extensive that at its epicenter in London, England, most features of daily life – from the cotton people wore, to the sugared tea they drank, to the companies they worked for, to the banks where they deposited their money – were intimately tied to everyday life in places as far apart as Central Africa, the Caribbean, India, North America, and Latin America. At other times, both before and after the height of European imperialism, the consequences of the long-distance ties were less significant in terms of linking and shaping daily life in different parts of the world. Despite this episodic and uneven process of development, though, the important point is that global ties are not new. What *is* new, and what is quite remarkable in this regard, is the rise of a widely shared sense of the importance of something called “Globalization.” This really only happened in the late twentieth century, starting in the 1960s and becoming increasingly omnipresent as a focus of debate and concern in the periods from the 1990s to today.

One reason for the rising concern with globalization over the last two decades is that it was only after key industrial, financial, and technological shifts in the 1960s and 1970s that the door was opened for different forms of global interdependency to *come together* to have a collective globalizing impact. Economic, political, and social networks – networks of commodity production, of finance, of trade, of migrants, of communication, of media, of political organizing, and even of new disease vectors – all came together in the sense of accelerating and intensifying one another. In doing so, they linked more and more countries and communities to create an interdependent global whole that was greater than the sum of all the particular component network parts. No longer was it just trade, or money flows, or political systems, or the movements of migrants that linked different regions. Now, global interconnection was characterized by an evermore dense integration of *all* these different transnational ties into a larger interdependent system in which the spatial reach of the ties, the speed of the relays and reverberations through the ties, and the capacity of the ties to lead to significant impacts were all much greater. These comprehensive integrative effects also had powerful political consequences with governments around the world increasingly tying national policies to an acceptance of the idea that economic growth and development are dependent on integrating with global markets and liberalizing business from national regulation.

A key sign of this novel late twentieth-century interdependency and market-based integration was the invention of the actual word “globalization” itself. Despite all the global connections of nineteenth-century European imperialism, a word like globalization had never been used before. It only first appeared in a dictionary in Merriam Webster’s *New International Dictionary* in 1961. Around this time, it was often used in its English spelling (i.e. “globalisation” with an “s”) in British journals and papers such as *The Spectator* and *The Sunday Times* (to be followed by its first of many uses in *The Economist* in 1965). French academics were also early to start using the term (although in France, it came to be replaced by *mondialisation*). This

emergence of the word globalization into popular usage in the 1960s was a sign of the wider developments in the interconnectedness of global networks and their increasingly influential impact on policy making. Reciprocally, however, the subsequent explosion of debate and dispute over globalization also reflected the various ways in which politicians, activists, journalists, and other opinion leaders began to load the word with more and more political meaning based on their political perspectives on market freedom, market integration and the influence of market forces over much of social life. This process of politicization really only took off two decades later in the 1980s, and to understand it most effectively it is useful to introduce the second definition of globalization.

1.1.2 Globalization as buzzword

In a context where political leaders and polemicists from both the right and the left have increasingly used the term to pursue political goals, Globalization has become *an instrumental term put to work in shaping as well as representing the growth of global interdependency*. Some scholars refer to such politicized discourse on Globalization as “Globaloney” or “hyper-globalization,” while others view it as a reflection of a cultural common-sense they call “Globalism.”² Here, however, in this book, such political use of the term is indicated by simply spelling “Globalization” with a capital “G.” The key era for the development of this kind of politicized discourse about capital “G” Globalization was the 1980s. In this decade, influential politicians in the West – most notably, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and President Ronald Reagan in the United States – made the political argument that a huge range of trade, labor, finance, welfare, and social policies had to be radically reformed to make states more competitive and more open to integration in the context of a globalizing capitalist market economy. Free trade, privatization, tax cuts, welfare reform, low inflation, and the general deregulation of business and finance were all necessary, went the argument, if nation-states were to stand a chance of surviving the onrush of global competition.

Although this familiar package of political policies was originally promoted in the United States and United Kingdom by conservative politicians, it was quickly adopted by more liberal governments in wealthy democracies such as Canada and New Zealand. In other countries such as Chile, it was a policy package that was introduced and enforced using military violence, while elsewhere, particularly in Asian countries such as Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and, subsequently, China, it was adapted in ways that combined the commitments to export-led development and market integration with often authoritarian approaches to managing social and political life. In yet other developing countries in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, it was imposed in order to comply with conditions issued by international lending agencies – most importantly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank – and western-trained pro-market economists. The result has been the rise of a form of global political common-sense

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about the need for pro-market policy-making, economic liberalization, and global market integration, a common-sense that is referred to variously as “market fundamentalism,” “neoliberalism,” the “Washington Consensus,” “*laissez-faire* market capitalism” or simply just “Globalization.” In other words, the buzzword usage of Globalization has effectively made the word a synonym for a suite of pro-market policy norms and the wider influence of market-forces in political, social, and personal relations. Being pro-Globalization has therefore come to mean being pro-market, and being anti-Globalization has reciprocally become a simplistic description for activists who contest the benefits and highlight the suffering caused by global market forces. Similarly, whether used thus by earnest advocates in books with titles such as *Why Globalization Works* and *In Defence of Globalization*, or instead used by trenchant critics in books with titles such as *The Endgame of Globalization* and *Globalization and Its Terrors*, the association with pro-market policy norms remains constant.³ For this reason, we have to take a moment here to examine what exactly these norms look like and what capital “G” Globalization and its synonyms therefore seek to name.

The pro-market policy norms associated with Globalization are now so common and widespread that they sometimes seem like they are the only options available. Indeed, a very wide range of politicians – including most Democrats as well as Republicans in the United States, most Labour MPs as well as Conservatives in the United Kingdom, most Liberals and Socialists as well as right-wing politicians in Japan, Canada, France, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Sweden, and most democrats as well as autocrats in the poorer parts of the world – have all at various moments come to the same so-called “TINA” conclusion that Margaret Thatcher reached in the 1980s: namely, that in the context of global market integration, “There Is No Alternative” to pro-market policies. What then do these policies look like? The top 10 are well known, and for each there is also a sound-bite slogan that is also very familiar from everyday political speech:

1. trade liberalization – “adopt free trade”
2. privatize public services – “use business efficiency”
3. deregulate business and finance – “cut red tape”
4. cut public spending – “shrink government”
5. reduce and flatten taxes – “be business friendly”
6. encourage foreign investment – “reduce capital controls”
7. de-unionize – “respect rights to work & labor flexibility”
8. export led development – “trade not aid”
9. reduce inflation – “price stability & savings protection”
10. enforce property rights – “patent protection” & “titling.”

Throughout this book, and especially in Chapter 7, where we examine how these policy norms have come to shape practices of government around the world, the more historically accurate and theoretically nuanced term **neoliberalism** is used instead of Globalization to describe the resulting policy package (this also helps

avoid confusion with lower-case-“g” “globalization”). Like other terms shown in bold in the book, you can look up a longer definition of neoliberalism in the glossary. But because understanding this key term is also key to understanding the popular usage of synonyms such as Globalization, and because neoliberalism is counter-intuitive for many students (especially those in the United States who have grown up thinking that liberals are more inclined to regulate the market and impose taxes on business), a few more things must be noted about why scholars find this particular neologism (i.e. term of social science jargon) useful.

In a nutshell, the liberal in “neoliberal” refers to the liberal market (or “free market”) arguments of late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo who were arguing, amongst other things, for the liberalization of economic activity from control by the aristocracy. However, coming after the welfare-state liberalism of the mid-twentieth century, *neoliberalism* names a new return to these historical ideas that also comes with a political repudiation of liberal welfare-state policies (also known as “liberal Keynesian,” “New Deal,” or “Great Society” policies) about redistributing wealth and using government investments and regulations to generate and guide national growth. Instead, the top 10 neoliberal policy norms – the “10 commandments of neoliberalism,” if you will – are based on the idea that the best way to generate the greatest growth in the context of increasing global interdependency is by shrinking government (making it “smaller,” “more efficient,” or “leaner and meaner” in the sound bites we hear most often), while simultaneously liberating business and market forces from governmental control. Even after the financial crises of 2008–2012, no major reforms were made to neoliberal norms, and the influence of global market forces over social life continued to expand everywhere unabated. There were some major misgivings articulated by pro-business commentators who feared that unemployment, debt problems, and banking excesses would undermine the global future for capitalism.⁴ But instead of heeding these warnings, advocates of pro-market policy-making effectively used the crisis to further expand and entrench neoliberal norms with calls for more privatization, more tax reductions for the wealthy, and more cuts to liberal welfare-state protections.⁵

While supporters of neoliberalism often prefer alternative terms such as “free market capitalism,” both they and critics alike agree that there have been some fairly consistent results.⁶ Twentieth-century ideas about comprehensive government control over national economies have been abandoned or at least eclipsed by the new emphasis on minimalist and market-friendly government. The class interests of business elites have also been consistently advanced. Inequalities within populations have become more pervasive globally. All sorts of social institutions and relations – citizenship, education, dating, and even lining up in queues – have been marketized. And almost everywhere, policies of social redistribution and nationally inclusive health, welfare, and environmental protection have been subordinated to the competitive pressures of the global market. In place of the plural “freedoms” once celebrated by twentieth-century liberal leaders such as the President Franklin Roosevelt – whose famous “Four Freedoms” included “Freedom From Want” and

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“Freedom from Fear” – neoliberalism has substituted the singular freedom of the “Free-market.” To be sure, neoliberalism still only names a set of policy norms and governmental tendencies. In practice, the ability of its advocates to achieve their idealized utopia of total market freedom has been globally uneven. They have often met with resistance, and where they have made progress towards their free-market ideals, the direction of reform has been shaped by local and national conditions. In reality, therefore, we do not see a single one-size-fits-all neoliberalism globally, but rather a patchwork of variegated and path-dependent neoliberalization processes.

Some of the variety in macro-scale forms of neoliberalization across countries and regions has been associated in turn with micro-scale variations in how individuals have been personally enlisted into new market-based behaviors. Scholars studying the social relations of neoliberalism also therefore sometimes use the term to describe market-based behavioral norms of competition and individualism, including speculative, entrepreneurial, or actuarial ideas about how to manage risk in one’s personal life.⁷ These accounts of the so-called “responsibilization” of individuals in neoliberal societies and the cultivation of “enterprising subjects” are not necessarily critical of the associated emphasis on personal accountability. Some point to the problems and inequalities introduced by taking aggressively individualistic approaches to allocating incentives and punishments, but others are simply interested in how the new market-oriented forms of individualism change older ideas of citizenship and social solidarity. By contrast, social justice campaigners in the so-called “Anti-Globalization” movement have frequently linked their arguments against neoliberal policy reforms (such as privatization) with equally damning criticisms of the ways personal freedom and creativity become targets of commercialization (such as Apple ads inviting wealthy consumers to think differently by buying a Mac).⁸ For the same reason, “Anti-Globalization” activism is generally better understood as “anti-neoliberal” activism. What brings the activists together on the streets and on the Internet is a shared opposition to both neoliberal policies and the neoliberal refashioning of responsibility as always and everywhere individualistic. This in turn helps explain better why it is an activism that has traveled across borders, too, thereby leading to a global movement against neoliberalism that is not at all opposed to the globalization of social justice and solidarity amongst those who feel alienated from global competition.

While “Anti-Globalization” does not really work very well as a label for the anti-neoliberal critics, for pro-market advocates of neoliberalization the term “Globalization” has often proved very useful, allowing them to shift easily from observations about global changes to arguments that neoliberal policies are the only ones that make sense in a globalizing world. This brings us back to the example of the TINA argument. One reason for the TINA-touts’ early success in selling the idea there was no alternative to neoliberal reforms was that with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, there really were no significant alternatives to market capitalism anymore. Overnight, these changes brought 30 former communist countries and over 400 million people into the global market economy. Communist China had also started to go capitalist with

a vengeance during this period, and with the very small and partial exceptions of countries such as Cuba noted, few governments in the world actively tried to foster non-capitalist economic organization. Yet, in addition to the dearth of counter-capitalist examples, the second basis for TINA-tout arguments has been their successful association of the need for neoliberal reforms with simplistic claims about globalization. In other words, what helped make neoliberalism seem like the only policy-making alternative after communism was the successful conflation of globalization with Globalization. Instead of a complex interplay of interdependencies, Globalization was thereby represented as a simple sort of natural phenomenon like the morning sunrise: something that was sweeping the world and was basically a good thing, but something, too, that was also unstoppable and unchangeable. The only response to the ties that bind, said the TINA touts, was to tie them more strongly by implementing pro-market reforms.

Not surprisingly, these sorts of associations and claims have subsequently been widely contested by anti-neoliberals. Groups as diverse as unions, environmentalists, feminists, landless peasants, and AIDS activists have all rejected the argument that globalization is unchangeable. They also therefore question the claim that it necessitates a single neoliberal rule-set for policy-making. For them, globalization does not equate with neoliberal Globalization. Instead, and despite their great diversity, the critics argue that there are real achievable alternatives to neoliberal policies (see Chapter 10). Other forms of more just, equitable, environmentally sustainable and democratic globalization are possible, they say. In doing so, they have also obviously questioned the meaning and definition of Globalization, too. The result has been a storm of debate involving all kinds of clashing definitions, data, interpretations, slogans, myths, and exaggerations. And it has been in the midst of all this controversy that Globalization has become the contested buzzword we know it as today.

As will become clear in the chapters that follow, it is not always as easy to distinguish between globalization (the name for heightened global interdependency) and Globalization (the politically loaded buzzword) as the spelling with the lower-case and upper-case "G"s implies. The two-way relationships between the different uses instead repeatedly blur the distinction between them. The instrumental political uses of the term, for example, are at least to some extent the political outcome of pressures created by basic shifts in the organization of global capitalist networks. In turn, the pro-market policies that have been put in place by politicians appealing to the TINA take on Globalization have enabled yet more global economic linkages to develop. These additional linkages really have generated market forces that are hard to change, and these have in turn led to the still more widespread political description of Globalization as an unstoppable juggernaut that necessitates neoliberalism. However, for the purposes of making academic sense of all these relays and relationships, the distinction remains a useful starting-point. The rest of this introductory chapter is therefore organized around a deeper examination of globalization in terms of the overlapping global interdependencies it brings together. All the more politically loaded questions about the use and abuse of

Globalization as a term of political discourse are deferred to Chapter 2, and it is there that you will discover more about why the term has become so significant and so fraught with controversy. The rest of this chapter, by contrast, outlines the main forms of global interdependency – commodity ties, labor ties, money ties, legal ties, governmental ties, ecological ties, health ties, and the ties of social and political response – which are used as the organizing themes for the subsequent chapters of this book (Chapters 3–10).

1.2 The Networks of Global Interdependency

Part of what social scientists always do when trying to make sense of complicated social phenomena is to make classificatory distinctions that “unpack” the phenomena in question into various component parts. With topics such as globalization, this is rather difficult. Indeed, the problems presented by globalization are a little like the challenge presented by the fabled elephant in the story about the six blind men. This traditional oral fable about the blind men and the elephant is itself something of a global legend, having been retold right across Asia from Han Dynasty China, to India, through retellings in the Buddhist Sutra, to more recent renditions as an exercise for US Peace Corps volunteers to practice in places as far apart as Lesotho and Lithuania! In any event, the story is a good allegory of the dangers of only looking at parts of a larger whole. In the story, the first blind man feels the side of the elephant and concludes that it is a wall. The second feels the trunk and thinks it is a snake. The third feels the tusk and says it is a spear. The fourth feels the knee and argues it is a tree. The fifth feels the ear and thinks it is a fan. And the sixth feels the tail and believes it is just a rope. Religious retellings of this story often suggest that the elephant represents a god that ordinary mortals cannot fully understand. To some extent, this is a good metaphor for the way Globalization is repeated like a holy mantra in political speech. However, here the main point of using this allegory is to make a more practical point about academic interpretations of the interconnections comprising globalization.

The way scholars have approached globalization through the questions and concerns of their own particular disciplines sometimes makes their preoccupations seem a little like the arguments of the six blind men. Political scientists, for example, often meet something like a wall in so far as their focus on the ways that national governments act in the context of global interdependency can obscure other forms of government that operate at other scales or that work through the market. Communications theorists discover a trunk in new networks like the Internet, but may not always see the economic and political projects, including older national projects, that such new media support. Economists, ever focused on the financial flows and market mechanisms of global commerce, seem to see the spear of globalization but only a fraction of its larger political and cultural consequences. Geographers (of which this author is one) are fascinated with the spatial connections and transformations brought about by globalization, but in exploring these

routes, they do not always adequately examine globalization's historical roots. Anthropologists find an ear of sorts in studying the ways in which new hybrid cultural practices like world music or patient–doctor relations are changing amidst global ties to the Internet. However, they do not so often investigate the commercial connections and political transformations that shape and confine cultural creativity. And sociologists, to pick one last example, chart all kinds of demographic outcomes of globalization, particularly in terms of the impact of migration, but sometimes allow long lines of numbers to obscure political and economic forces that put populations in motion in the first place. In all these disciplines, there are scholars who can readily claim that their work serves as a counter-example to such tendencies, but the point surely is clear. Disciplinary traditions can often elide the full complexity of globalization. Even as we develop specialist thematic analyses, therefore, we also need to constantly keep in mind the way in which globalization has developed as a complex tapestry of ties that exceed any simple disciplinary purview.

There is one more lesson in the fable of the blind men and the elephant that we can draw on as a guide to analyzing the complex tapestry of globalization. It is a lesson about collaboration. In this sense, the problem with the six blind men was not their blindness so much as their inability to share their experiences and information. The academic corollary of this is simple. To avoid the dangers of disciplinary division and elision, we need a more interdisciplinary approach. Ideally, this is exactly what a university education provides, and it is also what good scholarship provides in so far as it draws on ideas, arguments, and evidence developed in a wide range of disciplines. The chapters that follow are written in the spirit of this ideal. Each chapter still seeks to focus on a particular thematic focus, but the overall aim is to assemble an interdisciplinary assessment of globalization on which more specialist and advanced work can subsequently be built.

Of course, no one book, least of all one authored by a single scholar, can hope to address every single disciplinary contribution to our understanding of global interconnections. So, while the ideal here is unabashedly interdisciplinary, the account of globalization that follows still has a thematic focus that reflects this author's academic home in the social sciences. After all, it would be perfectly possible to introduce globalization with a natural science focus on global ecosystem interconnections, global climate change dynamics, and the planetary movements of microbes. Chapter 9 does in fact attempt to address some of these ecological ties, too. But, just like most other treatments of globalization by economists, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, and other geographers, the substantive focus running through the book as a whole is on the social system of capitalism. Thus, a little justification is needed now of what this basic focus brings into view and why it matters.

Without a doubt, the driving force of global social interdependency from the sixteenth century onwards has been the development and expansion of the economic system of capitalism. Capitalism has at least four innate economic characteristics that help explain the ways in which it has led to more and more global interconnection. It is an economic system that depends first of all on *growth*. Capitalists have to

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keep on making profits to stay in business, and the sum of all these profits adds up to growth (which can be measured on a regional, national, or global basis over varying lengths of time). Second, in this ceaseless pursuit of profit, capitalists are constantly searching for *new markets* into which they can expand and sell their commodities. Third, in competing with one another to survive and make higher profits, capitalists are also always seeking ways to cut costs by finding *cheaper inputs* including cheaper raw materials and cheaper labor. And fourth, capitalists are also always driven by competition to *speed up* the production and sales process so that they can produce profits faster. These needs lead in turn to system-wide imperatives to accelerate transportation and overcome distance while also simultaneously creating a remarkable system of market-based coordination of the resulting ties. Just as Adam Smith and Karl Marx were both fascinated by these invisible effects of integration in early capitalism, contemporary commentators from radically different political perspectives also tend to agree that the main characteristics of capitalism create ties that bind and coordinate across the whole planet.⁹

It is quite easy to see how pressures that emerge from the basic forces of capitalism have led to key developments that are now associated with globalization. From the nineteenth-century railways that imperialists built across Africa, India, and Latin America to today's dense air transportation networks, we can chart many ways in which the capitalist need to overcome spatial barriers has revolutionized transportation. Between 1920 and 1990, for example, the cost of ocean freight transport was reduced by 70%. Likewise, from the early use of the telegram to today's use of the Internet and satellites, the need for companies and investors to do business across ever larger distances has led to the radical transformation of global communications. The cost of a 3 min phone call from New York to London, for instance, fell to \$0.20 in 2012 from the equivalent of \$60.42 in 1960.

Data like these on what is sometimes called the “destruction of distance” or “the annihilation of space” are remarkable and can be easily multiplied. Ironically, however, journalistic commentaries on globalization often tend to downplay the capitalist causes of such transportation and communication developments. They tend to focus too much on the technological innovations themselves as the primary causes and defining features of global integration. Here, by contrast, the emphasis is placed on examining the ways in which these technologies work *through* capitalism to connect lives across the planet. To do this most effectively, we must therefore examine how the interdependencies of capitalist networks organize and coordinate the global connections of commodities, labor, money, laws, government, spaces, and health. In other words, how can we trace the coordinating effects of capitalism through the main forms of global interdependency explored in the rest of the book?

1.2.1 The interdependencies of commodities

The economic interconnections of globalization present themselves first and foremost as an immense collection of commodities. From cars, coffee, and computers