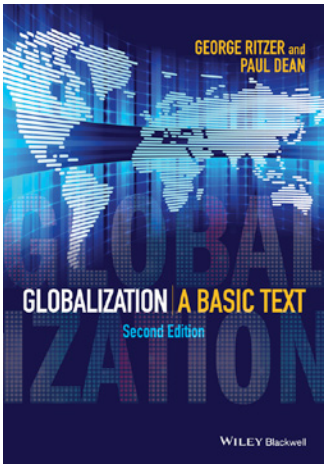
GEORGE RITZER | PAUL DEAN

GLOBALIZATION
THE ESSENTIALS

SECOND EDITION

WILEY Blackwell

Globalization



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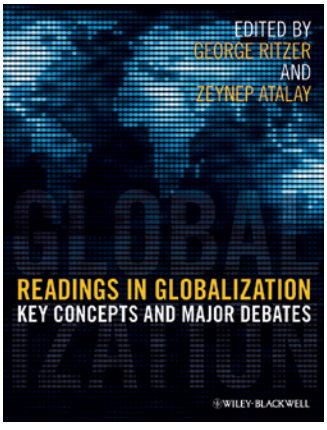

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GLOBALIZATION : THE ESSENTIALS

Second Edition

GEORGE RITZER
AND
PAUL DEAN

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

Globalization: The Essentials is an abbreviated version of *Globalization: A Basic Text* (2015). While the latter is designed as a full-scale textbook for a course on globalization, this volume is considerably shorter. It can still be used as a text in such a course, but its comparative brevity enables the instructor to assign other books as well. In addition, it can be used as a supplementary book in a variety of other courses in sociology and the social sciences. As the title suggests, this volume retains the essential elements of the original text. Two chapters, the Appendix, and some segments of all chapters have been deleted from *Globalization: A Basic Text* to create it. That material is, of course, important, but hard decisions had to be made about what to cut and what not to cut. It is our belief that this shorter text continues to deliver what is most important to a fundamental understanding of this deeply important process.

ABOUT THE COMPANION WEBSITE

The *Globalization: A Basic Text, Second Edition*, companion website includes a number of resources created by the author that you will find helpful.

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- Teaching Notes
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CHAPTER

1

Globalization

Conceptualization, Origins, and History

Globalization: The Essentials, Second Edition. George Ritzer and Paul Dean.

Companion website: www.wiley.com/go/ritzer/globalization

Globalization is increasingly omnipresent. We are living in *a* – or even *the* – "global age" (Albrow 1996; Deflem 2016). Globalization is clearly a very important change; it can even be argued (Bauman 2003) that it is *the most important change in human history*. This is reflected in many domains, but particularly in social relationships and social structures, especially those that are widely dispersed geographically. "In the era of globalization … shared humanity face[s] *the most fateful* of the many fateful steps" it has made in its long history (Bauman 2003: 156, italics added).

The following is the definition of globalization to be used in this book (note that all of the italicized terms will be discussed in this chapter and will inform the remainder of this book):

Globalization: Planetary process(es) involving increasing liquidity and growing multidirectional flows, as well as the structures they encounter and create.

Globalization is a planetary process or set of processes involving increasing *liquidity* and the growing multidirectional *flows* of people, objects, places and information as well as the *structures* they encounter and create that are *barriers* to, or *expedite*, those flows.

In contrast to many other definitions of globalization, this one does *not* assume that greater integration is an inevitable component of globalization. That is, globalization can bring with it greater integration (especially when things flow easily), but it can also serve to reduce the level of integration (when structures are erected that successfully block flows). For example, increasingly global flows recently led to the so-called Brexit, where British voters rejected greater integration with the European Union.

Transnationalism: Processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geopolitical borders.

A term that is closely related to globalization is **transnationalism** (Khagram 2012), or "processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geo-political borders" (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007: 62). A related concept is **transnationality**, or "the rise of new communities and formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined through the traditional reference point of nation-states" (Robinson 2007: 1199–1201).

Transnationality: The rise of new communities and formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined as nation-states.

Globalization and transnationalism are often used interchangeably, but transnationalism is clearly a more delimited process than globalization. Transnationalism is limited to interconnections that cross geopolitical borders, especially those associated with two or more nation-states. An example is Mexican immigrants in the United States sending remittances home to family members in Mexico. Globalization includes such connections, but is not restricted to them, and encompasses a far wider range of planetary processes (e.g. direct relationships between people in many places in

the world networking via the Internet). Further, geopolitical borders are only one of the barriers encountered, and often overcome, by globalization. Some phenomena, such as migration and the changing structures of families, are better thought of as transnational than as global. Transnationalism is most often used in thinking about, and research on, immigrants who move from one country to another, but who continue to be involved in various ways with the country from which they came (Faist 2012; Portes 2001).

The case of baseball is useful in clarifying the distinction between globalization and transnationalism (Kelly 2007). Baseball is a transnational sport because many of its fundamentals – techniques, strategies, and so on – and players have circulated across the borders of a small number of nations, especially Japan, Taiwan, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and, of course, the United States. However, it is *not* global because it has not flowed to a large portion of the world.

In contrast, soccer would be much more clearly a global sport because it exists in virtually every area of the world. For example, over 200 of the world's nations are members of a global organization, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Another example of globalization in the realm of sports is the summer (and winter) Olympics, sponsored by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), in which about the same number of nations participate.

Of course, each concept can also be useful for describing different aspects of the same topic, such as the labor movement. Alliances in the labor movement – such as those between US workers, Honduran labor unions, and the Bridgestone-Firestone workers in Liberia – are best conceptualized as transnational because they involve specific linkages across national borders. However, the labor movement is facilitated by Global Union Federations and makes use of Global Framework Agreements that promote universal norms in order to be effective (Evans 2014). Accordingly, global and transnational processes can operate simultaneously and interact in unique ways.

CONCEPTUALIZING GLOBALIZATION

In spite of the focus in this book on globalization, there are many scholars who do not accept the idea. Nevertheless, this book embraces and operates from a "globalist" perspective (Hirst and Thompson 1999) – globalization *is* a reality. Debates about globalization are one of the reasons that there is perhaps no topic today more difficult to get one's head around, let alone to master, than globalization. However, of far greater importance is the sheer magnitude, diversity, and complexity of the process of globalization, which involves almost everyone, everything, and every place, in innumerable ways. (The concept of **globality** refers to the condition [in this case omnipresence] resulting from the process of globalization [Scholte 2004; Wilson 2012].)

Globality: Omnipresence of the process of globalization.

Metaphor: Use of one term to help us better understand another.

Before proceeding to the next section, a note is needed on the use of **metaphors** (Brown 1989), which will occupy a prominent place in the ensuing discussion. A metaphor involves the use of one term to help us better understand another. Thus, in the next section, we will use the metaphor of a "solid" to describe epochs before the era of globalization. Similarly, the global world will be described as being "liquid." The use of such metaphors is designed to give the reader a better and a more vivid sense of the global age and how it differs from prior epochs.

From "Solids" to "Liquids"

Prior to the current epoch of globalization (as we will see in the second part of this chapter, most observers believe that there *was* a previous epoch, if not many previous epochs, of globalization), it could be argued that one of the things that characterized people, things, information, places, and much else was their greater **solidity**. That is, all of them tended to be hard or to harden (metaphorically and figuratively, not literally) over time, and therefore – among other things – to remain largely in place. As a result, people either did not go anywhere or they did not venture very far from where they were born and raised; their social relationships were restricted to those who were nearby. Much the same could be said of most objects (tools, food, etc.), which tended to be used where they were produced. The solidity of most material manifestations of information – stone tablets, newspapers, magazines, books, and so on – also made them at least somewhat difficult to move very far. Furthermore, since people didn't move far, neither did information. Places were not only quite solid and immoveable, but they tended to confront solid natural (mountains, rivers, oceans) and artificial (walls, gates) barriers that made it difficult for people and things to exit or to enter.

Solidity: People, things, information, and places "harden" over time and therefore have limited mobility.

Above all, solidity describes a world in which barriers exist and are erected to prevent the free movement of all sorts of things. It was the nation-state that was most likely to create these "solid" barriers (e.g. walls [the Great Wall of China; the wall between Israel and the West Bank], border gates, and guards), and the state itself grew increasingly solid as it resisted change. For much of the twentieth century, this was epitomized by the Soviet Union and its satellite states, which sought to erect any number of barriers in order to keep all sorts of things out *and* in (especially a disaffected population). With the passage of time, the Soviet Union grew increasingly rigid and unable to adapt to changing conditions. The best example of this solidity was the erection (beginning in 1961) and maintenance of the Berlin Wall in order to keep East Berliners in and Western influences out. There was a more fluid relationship between East and West Berlin prior to the erection of the Wall, but that fluidity was seen in the East as being disadvantageous, even dangerous. Once the Wall was erected, relations between West and East Berlin were virtually frozen in place – they solidified – and there was comparatively little movement of anything between them.

The Wall, together with East Germany and the Soviet Union, is long gone, and with it many of the most extreme forms of solidity brought into existence by the Cold War. Nonetheless, solid structures remain – the nation-state and its borders and customs controls – and there are ever-present calls for the creation of new, and new types of, solid structures. Thus, in many parts of Europe, there are demands for more barriers to authorized and unauthorized immigration, which was one factor that fueled Brexit in 2016. This has reached an extreme in the United States, with concern over undocumented Mexican (and other Latin American) immigration leading to the proposed erection of an enormous wall on its southern border. Thus, solidity is far from dead in the contemporary world. It is very often the case that demands for new forms of solidity are the result of increased fluidity. However, a strong case can – and will – be made that it is fluidity that is more characteristic of today's world, especially in terms of globalization.

Of course, people were *never* so solid that they were totally immobile or stuck completely in a given place (a few people were able to escape East Berlin in spite of the Wall, and many will be able to enter the United States without authorization even with increased border controls), and this was especially true of the elite members of any society. Elites were (and are) better able to move about, and that ability increased with advances in transportation technology. For the right price, elites may even buy citizenship in some countries (Mansharamani 2016). Commodities, too, especially those created for elites, could almost always be moved, and they likewise grew more moveable as technologies advanced. Information (because it was not solid, although it could be solidified in the form of, for example, a book) could always travel more easily than goods or people (it could be spread by word of mouth over great distances even if its originator could not move very far; it moved even faster as more advanced communication technologies emerged [telegraph, telephone, the Internet, smart phones]). And as other technologies developed (ships, automobiles, airplanes), people, especially those with the resources, were better able to leave places and get to others. They could even literally move places (or at least parts of them), as, for example, when in the early 1800s Lord Elgin dismantled parts of the Parthenon in Greece and transported them to London, where to this day they can be found in the British Museum.

However, at an increasing rate over the last few centuries, and especially in the last several decades, that which once seemed so solid has tended to "melt" and become increasingly *liquid*. Instead of thinking of people, objects, information, and places as being like solid blocks of ice, they need to be seen as tending to melt and as becoming increasingly liquid. It is, needless to say, far more difficult to move blocks of ice than the water that is produced when those blocks melt. Of course, to extend the metaphor, there continue to exist blocks of ice, even glaciers (although even these are now literally melting), in the contemporary world that have not melted, at least not completely. Solid material realities (people, cargo, newspapers) continue to exist, but because of a wide range of technological developments (in transportation, communication, the Internet, etc.) they can move across the globe far more readily. Everywhere we turn, more things – including ourselves – are becoming increasingly liquefied.

Karl Marx opened the door to this kind of analysis (and to the use of such metaphors) when he famously argued that because of the nature of capitalism as an economic system, "everything solid melts into air." That is, many of the solid, material realities that preceded capitalism (e.g. the structures of feudalism) were "melted" by it and transformed into liquids. However, while Marx was describing a largely destructive process, the point here is that the new liquids that are being created are inherent parts of the new world and are radically transforming it. In the process, they are having *both* constructive and destructive effects (Schumpeter 1976).

Marx's insight of over a century-and-a-half ago was not only highly prescient, but is far truer today than it was in his own time. In fact, it is truer than he could ever have imagined. Furthermore, the melting – much like one of the great problems in the global world today, the melting of the ice on and near the North and South Poles as a result of global warming (see Chapter 9) – is likely not only to continue in the coming years, but to increase at an exponential rate. Indeed, the melting of the polar icecaps can be seen as another metaphor for the increasing fluidity associated with globalization, especially its problematic aspects. And, make no mistake, that fluidity presents *both* great opportunities *and* great dangers.

Thus, the perspective on globalization presented here, following the work of Zygmunt Bauman (2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2012), is that it involves, above all else, increasing **liquidity** (Davis 2016). Several of Bauman's ideas on liquidity are highly relevant to this perspective. For example, liquid phenomena do not easily, or for long, hold their shape. Thus, the myriad liquid phenomena associated with globalization are hard-pressed to maintain any particular form, and even if they acquire one, it is likely to change quite quickly.

Liquidity: The increasing ease of movement of people, things, information, and places in the global age.

Liquid phenomena fix neither space nor time. That which is liquid is, by definition, opposed to any kind of fixity, be it spatial or temporal. This means that the spatial and temporal aspects of globalization are in continuous flux. That which is liquid is forever ready to change whatever shape (space) it might take on momentarily. Time (however short) in a liquid world is more important than space. Perhaps the best example of this is global finance, where little or nothing (dollars, gold) actually changes its place (at least immediately), but time is of the essence in that the symbolic representations of money move instantaneously and great profits can be made or lost in split-second decisions.

Liquid phenomena not only move easily, but are difficult to stop from moving. This is exemplified in many areas, such as foreign trade, investment, and global financial transactions (Knorr Cetina 2016), the globality of transactions and interactions on the Internet (e.g. Facebook, Twitter [Axford 2016]), and the difficulty in halting the global flow of drugs, pornography, organized crime, and undocumented immigrants.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, that which is liquid tends to melt whatever stands in its path (especially solids). This is clearest in the case of the much discussed death, or at least decline, of the nation-state and its borders in the era of

increasing global flows (see Chapter 5). According to Cartier (2001: 269), the "forces of globalization have rendered many political boundaries more porous to flows of people, money, and things."

It is clear that if one wanted to use a single term to describe globalization today, liquidity (as well as the closely related idea of flows) would be at or near the top of the list. That is not to say that there are no solid structures left – after all, we still live in a modern world, even if it is late modernity, and modernity has long been associated with solidity. And it does not mean that there is not a constant interplay between liquidity and solidity, with increases in that which is liquid (e.g. terrorist attacks launched against Israel from the West Bank during the Intifada) leading to counter-reactions involving the erection of new solid forms (e.g. the fence between Israel and the West Bank), but at the moment, and for the foreseeable future, the momentum lies with increasing and proliferating global liquidity.

"Flows"

Closely related to the idea of liquidity, and integral to it, is another key concept in thinking about globalization, the idea of **flows** (Appadurai 1996; Rey and Ritzer 2010); after all, liquids flow easily – far more easily than solids. In fact, it is the concept of flows that is widely used in the literature on globalization, and it is this concept that will inform a good deal of the body of this book.

Flows: The movement of people, things, information, and places due, in part, to the increasing porosity of global barriers.

Because so much of the world has "melted," or is in the process of "melting," and has become liquefied, globalization is increasingly characterized by great *flows* of increasingly liquid phenomena of all types, including people, objects, information, decisions, places, and so on. For example, foods of all sorts increasingly flow around the world, including sushi globalized from its roots in Japan (Edwards 2012), Chilean produce now ubiquitous in the US market (and elsewhere), Indian food in London (and throughout much of the world), and so on. In many cases, the flows have become raging floods that are increasingly unlikely to be impeded by, among other things, place-based barriers of any kind, including the oceans, mountains, and especially the borders of nation-states.

Looking at a very different kind of flow, many people in many parts of the world believe that they are being swamped by migrants, especially poor undocumented migrants (Hogan and Haltinner 2015). Whether or not these are actually floods, they have come to be seen that way by many people, often aided by politicians and media personalities who have established their reputations by portraying them as such.

Undoubtedly because of their immateriality, ideas, images, and information, both legal (e.g. blogs) and illegal (e.g. child pornography), flow (virtually) everywhere through interpersonal contact and the media, especially the Internet.

Decisions of all sorts flow around the world, as well as over time: "The effect of the [economic] decisions flowed, and would continue to flow, through every possible conduit. Some decisions would be reflected in products rolling off assembly

lines, others in prices of securities, and still others in personal interactions. Each decision would cascade around the world and then forward through time" (Altman 2007: 255).

Even places can be said to be flowing around the world, as, for example, immigrants recreate the places from which they came in new locales (e.g. Indian and Pakistani enclaves in London). Furthermore, places (e.g. airports, shopping malls) themselves have become increasingly like flows (for more on this and the transition from "spaces of places" to "spaces of flows," see Castells 1996).

Even with all of this increasing fluidity, much of what would have been considered the height of global liquidity only a few decades (or even years) ago now seems increasingly sludge-like. This is especially the case when we focus on the impact of the computer and the Internet on the global flow of all sorts of things. Thus, not long ago we might have been amazed by our ability to order a book from Amazon.com and receive it via an express package delivery system in as little as a few hours. That method, however, seems to operate at a snail's pace compared to the ability to download that book in seconds on Amazon's Kindle system (a wireless reading device to which books and other reading matter can be downloaded).

"Heavy" and "Light"

There is another set of conceptual distinctions, or metaphors, that are useful in thinking about globalization. In addition to the change from solids to liquids, we can also think in terms of change that involves movement from that which is *heavy* to that which is *light* (this is another distinction traceable to the work of Zygmunt Bauman).

The Gutenberg Bible (produced in mid-fifteenth-century Germany) was usually published in two volumes, ran close to 1400 pages, and was printed on very heavy paper or vellum. It was in every sense of the term a heavy tome – difficult, because of its sheer weight and bulk, to transport. Fast forward to 2019, and a much lighter bound copy of the Bible could easily be purchased from Amazon and transported in days via express mail virtually anywhere in the world. The Bible has become weightless, too, since it can be downloaded using the Kindle system.

More generally, it could be argued that both pre-industrial and industrial societies were quite "heavy"; that is, characterized by that which is difficult to move. This applies equally to those who labored in them (e.g. peasants, farmers, factory workers), to where they labored (plots of land, farms, factories), and to what they produced (crops, machines, books, automobiles). Because of their heaviness, workers tended to stay put, and what they produced (and what was not consumed locally) could be moved – especially over great distances – only with great effort and at great expense. Later advances, especially in technology, made goods, people, and places "lighter": easier to move. These included advances in both transportation and technology that made all sorts of industrial products smaller, lighter, and easier to transport (compare the pocket-sized smart phone of today to the room-sized computer of the mid-twentieth century).

Knorr Cetina (2005: 215) has written about what she calls "complex global microstructures," or "structures of connectivity and integration that are global in scope but microsociological in character." She has described financial markets (Knorr Cetina 2012; Knorr Cetina and Bruegger 2002) in these terms, and, more recently, global terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and ISIS. We will have more to say about these global microstructures in Chapter 10, but the key point here is that while Knorr Cetina sees them as having several characteristics, of primary importance is their "lightness" in comparison to "heavy" bureaucratic systems. Thus, unlike the armed forces of the United States, al-Qaeda and ISIS are not heavy bureaucratic structures, but rather light "global microstructures." It is their lightness that gives them many advantages over the extremely cumbersome US military and the huge bureaucracy of which it is part, and this helps account – at least so far – for the latter's difficulty in suppressing their terrorist networks.

It could be argued that we moved from the heavy to the light era in the past century or two. However, by about 1980, we can be said to have moved beyond both. We are now in an era that is increasingly defined not just by lightness, but by something approaching weightlessness. That which is weightless, or nearly so, clearly moves far more easily (even globally) than that which is either heavy or light. The big changes here involved the arrival and expansion of cable and satellite television, satellite radio, cell phones, personal computers, and tablets, and most importantly, the advent of the Internet, social media (e.g. Twitter), and smart phones. It is with the personal computer, the Internet, and the smart phone that globalization reaches new heights in terms of the flow of things and of social relationships, in large part because they – along with everything else – have approached weightlessness.

An excellent example of this can be found in the world of music. Vinyl records were quite heavy, and the shift to cassettes and later CDs did not make music much lighter. However, the creation of advanced technologies such as smart phones allows us to carry around thousands of once very heavy albums in our pockets, or to play them from the cloud. We can carry that music with us anywhere in the world, and we can exchange music over the Internet with people around the globe.

Of course, there are still many heavy things in our increasingly weightless world. Factories, offices, buildings, large and cumbersome machines (including MRI machines), newspapers, hardback books, and even some people (made "heavy" by, for example, minority status, poverty, a lack of education) continue to exist. All are nevertheless being globalized to some degree in one way or another, but their weightiness makes that process more cumbersome and difficult for them. For example, the global parcel delivery systems (e.g. FedEx, DHL) have become very efficient, but they still need to transport a physical product over great distances. Clearly, that process is still quite weighty in comparison to, say, the downloading of weightless movies from Netflix (a website that began by allowing members to receive heavier DVDs via snail-mail) or viewing them on-demand. In fact, of course, it is increasingly the case that that which is weightless (e.g. iTunes and downloadable music in general, downloadable movies, blogs) is destroying that which is comparatively heavy (e.g. the CD, the DVD, newspapers, traditional cable packages).

The ideas of increasing liquidity and weightlessness being employed here do not require that the world be "flat" or be considered as such (Friedman 2005, 2009). Fluids can seep through all sorts of tall and wide structures, and – in the case of a flood – those structures can even be washed away (as was the Berlin Wall, for example, and more metaphorically, the Iron Curtain), at least temporarily. Further, that which is weightless can waft over and between the tallest and widest structures. Thus, the world today is increasingly characterized by liquidity and weightlessness, but it is *not* necessarily any flatter than it ever was. The tall, wide structures continue to be important, especially in impeding (or attempting to impede) the movement of that which is solid and heavy. It is less clear how successful these structures will be in impeding that which is liquid, light, or weightless.

The most obvious of such structures are the borders (Jones and Johnson 2016; Wastl-Walter 2012) between nation-states; in recent years, we have witnessed the strengthening (heightening, lengthening, etc.) of many of them. Similarly, the Chinese government has sought to restrict the access of its citizens to at least some aspects of the Internet that it feels are dangerous to its continued rule. The electronic barrier that it has constructed is known as the "Great Firewall" (Ramzy 2016). (A firewall is a barrier on the Internet; the idea of the Great Firewall plays off China's Great Wall.)

The huge "digital divide" in the world today (Drori 2012; Micheli 2015), especially between North and South, is another example of a barrier. The relative lack in the South of computers and the supporting infrastructure (broadband connections) needed for a computerized world creates an enormous barrier between it and the North. In terms of computerization, the world may be increasingly flat (although certainly not totally so) among and between the countries in the North, but there are many hills in the South, and huge and seemingly insurmountable mountain ranges between the two.

The history of the social world and social thought and research leads us to the conclusion that people, and their representatives in the areas in which they live, have always sought to erect structural barriers to protect and advance themselves and adversely affect others, and it seems highly likely that they will continue to do so. Thus, we may live in a more liquefied, more weightless world, but we do *not* live in a flat world, and we are not likely to live in one any time soon, if ever. Even a successful capitalist, George Soros, acknowledges this, using yet another metaphor, in his analysis of **economic globalization**: "The global capitalist system has produced a very *uneven* playing field" (Soros 2000: xix, italics added).

Economic globalization: Growing economic linkages at the global level.

"Heavy" Structures that Expedite "Flows"

The liquefaction of the social world, as well as its increasing weightlessness, is only part of the story of globalization. As pointed out already, another major part is the fact that many heavy, material, objective structures continue to exist and to be created in the globalized world. Some are holdovers from the pre-global world, but

others are actually produced, intentionally or unintentionally, by global forces. In studying globalization, we must look at *both* all of that which flows (or "wafts") with increasing ease *and* all of the structures that impede or block flows (see later), as well as serve to expedite and channel them. To put it another way, we must look at *both* that which is light and weightless *and* that which is solid and heavy, affecting flow in both a positive and a negative sense (Inda and Rosaldo 2008: 29).

For example, there are various "routes" or "paths" that can be seen as structures which serve both to expedite flows along their length and to limit flows outside their confines:

- Intercontinental airlines generally fly a limited number of well-defined routes (say between New Delhi and London), rather than whatever routes the pilots wish, which would greatly increase the possibility of mid-air collisions.
- Undocumented immigrants from Mexico have, at least until recently, generally followed a relatively small number of well-worn paths into the United States. Indeed, they often need to pay smugglers large sums of money, and the smugglers generally follow the routes that have worked for them (and others) in the past.
- Goods of all sorts are generally involved in rather well-defined "supply chains" (see Chapter 4) as they are exported from some countries and imported into others.
- Illegal products (e.g. illicit drugs) follow oft-trod paths en route from their point of manufacture (often in the South), through loosely controlled free-trade zones (e.g. in Dubai), via several intermediate countries, to their ultimate destination (often the United States), where they are frequently obtained over the Internet (Maddox et al. 2016).

Then, there are an increasing number of formal and informal "bridges" (Anner and Evans 2004) created across the globe that expedite the flow of all sorts of things. This applies perhaps best to the passage of people across borders with authorization, through the process of migration (Sassen 2007). It is clear that in the not-too-distant past, there were many structural barriers to the flow of people. There are a few places in the world today where this remains true – for example, into and out of North Korea. Nonetheless, with the end of the Cold War, there are now many bridges for people (and products) to cross openly not only between the countries of the old East and West, but also among and between virtually every country and region of the world. However, undocumented migrants are likely to need to be more covert in their movements. All sorts of illegal products are also unlikely to move openly across such "bridges," where they would be highly visible to the authorities. Thus, there are also more hidden structures that permit movement of unauthorized people and products.

It is also the case that an increasing number of people – perhaps nearly everyone – are involved in, and affected by, global relations and flows, and personally participate in global networks (Axford 2012; Singh Grewal 2008) of one kind or

another (networks of communication and information technology, interpersonal networks involving individuals and groups). While global networks span the globe (e.g. cables under the oceans that permit transoceanic communication [Yuan 2006]), or at least much of it, there are other types of network as well, including transnational (those that pass through the boundaries of nation-states [Portes 2001]), international (those that involve two or more nation-states), national (those that are bounded by the nation-state), and local (those that exist at the sub-national level) (Mann 2007). Networks can expedite the flow of innumerable things, but they are perhaps best suited to the flow of information (Connell and Crawford 2005). People involved in networks can communicate all sorts of information to one another in various ways: through phone calls, snail-mail, email, blogs, social networking websites, and so on. These networks have revolutionized and greatly expanded the global flow of information. As with all structures, such networks can also be blocked or monitored in various ways (e.g. via the Great Firewall or NSA surveillance).

The Internet can be seen as being of enormous importance in allowing information of various sorts to flow in innumerable directions. One example involves the formation of the networks that became and constitute the movements for global justice and democratization (see Chapter 13). These movements (as well as their various political actions, such as the anti-World Trade Organization [WTO] protests in Seattle in 1999 [Smith 2001]), like much else in the world today (e.g. Arab Spring), were made possible by the Internet (Hussain and Howard 2013).

Finally, it is not only individuals who are increasingly involved in networks. A growing number of social structures (e.g. states, cities, law) and social institutions (e.g. the family, religion, sport) are interconnected on a global basis, and these, too, enable and enhance global flows. For example, the international banking system has an infrastructure that facilitates the global movement of funds among a network of banks. Included in that infrastructure are International Bank Account Numbers (IBANs), rules, norms, and procedures concerning how such money transfers are to occur, and a highly sophisticated technical language that allows those in the business to communicate with one another wherever they are in the world. Another example involves global (Sassen 1991, 2013) and world cities (Derudder et al. 2012) that are increasingly directly interconnected, rather than being connected through the nation-states in which they happen to exist (see Chapter 11). The financial markets of the global cities of New York, London, and Tokyo are tightly linked, for example, with the result that all sorts of financial products flow among them at lightning speed. More generally, in this context, we can talk in terms of the "global economy's connectedness" (Altman 2007: 255).

"Heavy" Structures as Barriers to "Flows"

While there is no question that the world is increasingly characterized by greater liquidity and increased flows, as well as various structures that expedite those flows, we also need to recognize that there are limits and barriers to this. The world is not just in process, there are also many material structures (trade agreements, regulatory

agencies, borders, customs barriers, standards, and so on) in existence. As Inda and Rosaldo (2008: 31) argue: "Material infrastructures do not only promote mobility … They also hinder and block it." Any thoroughgoing account of globalization needs to look at *both* flows and structures, and, in terms of the latter, the ways in which they *both* produce and enhance flows, as well as alter and even block them. In other words, there is interplay between flows and structures, especially between flows and the structures that are created in an attempt to inhibit or stop them. As Shamir (2005: 197–217) puts it, globalization is an epoch of increased openness *and* "simultaneously an era of growing restrictions on movement." Borders, of course, are major points at which movement is blocked. There are many examples of this, including the toughening of border controls in the United Kingdom (and elsewhere in Europe), Australia, and the United States because of growing hostility to refugees and other immigrants (Hogan and Haltinner 2015).

There are challenges to the idea that all there is to globalization is flows and fluidity (Tsing 2000). In examining global flows (some of which have been anticipated earlier in the chapter), we also need to consider those agents who "carve" the channels through which things flow, those who alter the channels over time, the national and regional units that create and battle over flows, and the coalitions of claimants for control over the channels.

A focus on these kinds of agents and structures, rather than on flows, promises a more critical orientation to globalization in terms of the structures themselves, as well as in terms of who creates the structures and who does and does not control and profit from them.

The idea of flows is criticized for other reasons, as well. For example, there is a kind of timelessness to flows, which implies that they are likely to continue well into the future and there is little or nothing that can be done to stop them. This means that everyone – scientists, businesspeople who profit from flows, those at the margins of flows, and perhaps even those hurt by them – is swept up in the same processes. The focus on flows tends to communicate a kind of enthusiasm for them and the erroneous idea that virtually everyone benefits from flows of all types.

Another important idea is "frictions," or the "awkward, unequal, unstable … interconnection across difference" (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2005: 4). The key point is that the global flows that create interconnections do *not* move about smoothly; they do not move about without creating friction. Friction gets in the way of the smooth operation of global flows. However, friction not only slows flows down, it can also serve to keep them moving and even speed them up. Highways can have this double-edged quality by both limiting where people and vehicles can go and at the same time making movement "easier and more efficient" (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2005: 6). More generally, "global connections [are] made, and muddied, in friction" (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2005: 272). The key point in this context is that flows themselves produce friction that can slow or even stop global flows: "without even trying friction gets in the way of the smooth operation of global power. Difference can disrupt, causing everyday malfunctions as well as unexpected cataclysms. Friction refuses the lie that global power operates as a well-oiled machine. Furthermore, difference sometimes

inspires insurrection. Friction can be the fly in the elephant's nose" (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2005: 6). A prime example of this today is the many frictions being produced in many parts of the world by large numbers of authorized and unauthorized immigrants (e.g. the millions of refugees from Syria who have fled to Europe and other places, sometimes to be killed by border guards when entering a country without authorization) (Yeginsu and Shoumali 2016). Such frictions led Greece to complete a 6.5-mile fence along its border with Turkey, which was considered the most porous entry point for undocumented immigrants entering Europe (Besant 2012).

As has already been mentioned, the most important and most obvious barriers to global flows are those constructed by nation-states. Most countries have borders, gates, guards, passport controls, customs agents, health inspectors, and so on. (The great exception is the countries that are part of the European Union, where barriers to movement among and between member countries have been greatly reduced, if not eliminated. The European Union is a kind of structure that allows people and products to move much more freely and much more quickly. At the same time, it serves to reduce the need to use hidden channels, since there is far less need to conceal what is moving among and between EU countries.) Although many people (undocumented immigrants) and things (contraband goods) do get through such barriers, some are successfully blocked or impeded by them. It is especially difficult to erect barriers against many newer phenomena, especially the non-material phenomena associated with smart phones and the Internet.

Specific examples of barriers created by the nation-state involve the blocking of economic transactions regarded as not being in the national interest. For example, in 2006, the US government blocked a deal in which a Dubai company was to purchase an American company involved in the business of running US ports (*Economist* 2006b). The government felt that such ownership would be a threat to national security, since foreign nationals – perhaps enemies – could acquire information that would allow terrorists easy entry to the ports. In another example, in 2012, the US government blocked a Chinese firm from acquiring wind-farm projects in Oregon that were "within or near restricted air space at the Naval Weapons Systems Training Facility" (Paletta et al. 2012). The site is a training facility for attack squadrons and a testing site for military drones.

However, many of the barriers created by nation-states that we assume are (or might be) successful do not in fact deal with the flows they are supposed to stem. It remains to be seen whether expanding the wall between Mexico and the United States can reduce the flow of undocumented immigrants into the latter. Similarly, it is not clear that the wall between Israel and the West Bank will stop the flow of terrorists into Israel if (when?) hostilities in the Middle East flare up yet again.

There are many different kinds of organization that, while they may expedite flows for some, create all sorts of barriers for others. Nation-states are, in fact, one such organization, and they (generally) work to the advantage of their own citizens (and their flows, as well as the flows of things important to them) in many different ways, while creating many roadblocks for those from other countries. For example,