

Preface

Every generation has its own social, economic, or political challenges, and globalization is a powerful combination of all three. This is one topic that inevitably pops up in public media as well as in daily conversations, and one that we find difficult to discuss with clarity and equanimity. This volume amply demonstrates that even academic discourse is far from having reached a consensual understanding on foundational issues regarding the study of globalization. This is to be expected given the complexity of the issues in question and the richness of our disciplinary traditions. The hope is that the diversity of perspectives discussed here will enable the reader to appreciate the strength and complementarity of alternative points of view and research strategies.

We must be grateful to the contributors to this volume for having found time in the midst of their “globalizing” schedules to offer us a primer of first-hand research and/or a re-examination of the theoretical and methodological principles that have guided their globalization journey. The list of contributors has been augmented by leaps and bounds, as a result of consultations and debates. Repeated exchanges and revisions have produced a set of papers that are purposefully focused on theoretical and methodological issues that scholars face in globalization research. My gratitude goes to the “early” contributors for having patiently waited for the “late” deliverers and newcomers: I have continued to seek insightful and provocative contributors until the very end as the unfolding of the process has generated new theoretical and methodological issues.

There are many other people whom I must thank. I was unsuccessful in my repeated attempts to obtain an essay or a commentary from a representative of the World Polity perspective. However, John Boli has been helpful with comments, especially in the early stages of this project. Unfortunately, his administrative and publishing commitments have prevented him from writing a full-fledged essay. The patient and supporting series editor, Teresa Krauss, of Springer, and her competent editorial staff have provided competent support for the completion of this project. My “enduring” graduate assistants, Veronica Ticas and Christian Francis Tran, have helped me greatly in editorial matters, and some of my colleagues have occasionally “volunteered” to listen to my probing on globalization matters. Neither they nor my son, Paul, who kept wondering whether this book would ever make it to the press, have been told about my numerous hours spent in front of the PC to think through a lot of difficult issues. My wife Irene has assisted me over the years through my bouts with French structuralism, dialectic sociology, and disaster studies, and currently, globalization. Not only my perseverance, but also my style and

editorial chores have benefited a great deal from her supportive understanding and skills.

With the realization that the globalization debate is still in its early stage, I hope that this contributed volume will facilitate a multiperspective and a cross-disciplinary discourse on a complex process with all its ramifications and potential trajectories. One hopes also that the imbalances and tensions of the globalization process that have been documented in this volume will foster a genuine dialogue among all its protagonists, winners and losers alike.

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