The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions. Jeffrey D. Sachs. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. 280 pp. $24.95. Hardcover ISBN-13: 978-0231193740.

Jeffrey D. Sachs wants a global society in which people collaborate to maintain peace, produce a sustainable and healthy planet, and build inclusive and just societies—a world "made safe for diversity" (214). He argues that in order to create this world it is important to understand how geography, technology, and institutions have intertwined throughout history. By examining how these intersections evolved during specific eras, Sachs hopes we can better tackle the challenges and promises of the twenty-first century, a time when humans are more than ever inter-connected and capable of immense planetary change.

The book is geared toward an educated general public, though many academics will also find it a concise and useful synthesis of other, denser scholarship. The book is highly compatible with undergraduate courses on world history, globalization, and sustainability. Sachs writes in simple, clean prose that most students and general readers should find accessible. This is no small feat considering the massiveness of the topics and the brevity of the book.

To explain the causes and ramifications of globalization, Sachs focuses predominately on geography, technology, and institutions. Building squarely on Jared Diamond's work, Sachs argues that geography played a crucial role in the power imbalances among civilizations from their origins until modern times. Especially important were latitudinal location, climate, and resources. However, as civilizations grew more complex, people began to develop and use technologies in ways that began to allow some people to transcend some geographic barriers; think ocean-going vessels, airplanes, and the internet. These technologies were wrapped in institutional practices that influenced who had access to these technologies and how people employed them. Sachs argues that these technologies and institutional practices were dramatically shaped in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by scientific, industrial, political, economic, and imperial practices from Europe and the United States. Sachs advocates for strengthening globalist institutions and techno-logical integration to tackle challenges such as climate change while building a more sustainable and equitable global society.

Covering the entirety of human history, Sachs argues that there have been seven ages of globalization, each with their own defining characteristics: the Paleolithic Age (70,000 BCE-10,000 BCE), the Neolithic Age (10,000 BCE-3,000 BCE), the Equestrian Age (3,000 BCE-1000 BCE), the Classical Age (1,000 BCE-1500 CE), the Ocean Age (1500 CE-1800 CE), the Industrial Age (1800 CE-2000 CE), and the Digital Age (2000 CE-present). The Paleolithic Age was defined by migrating hunter-gatherers who had to collaborate and compete with each other as well as with Neanderthals and Denisovans. With the Neolithic Age came agriculture and animal husbandry, the rise of villages, and increased trade between these polities. During the Equestrian Age, Eurasians dramatically expanded interconnections through the "disruptive technology" of the horse, leading to major innovations in war, travel, and the manipulation of energy via horsepower. For Sachs, the horse hastened the coming of the state because of a greater ability to administrate and coerce over further distances. The rise of intensely competing land-based empires, philosophies, and religions

arose during the Classical Era. For the Ocean Age, Sachs focuses on the massive transformations made by European seafarers and their conquests in the Americas, Africa, and parts of Asia. Trade and politics became truly global. During the Industrial Age, societies carried out huge advancements in science and technology, tapping into the power of new societal orderings and fossil fuels. These changes brought about the first global political hegemon—the British Empire—followed by the United States.

Sachs sees humanity as currently in the Digital Age. The pervasiveness of data transmission, information technologies, and constantly increasingly computational power have brought new disruptions in economics, society, and geopolitics. For Sachs, these changes have initiated the end of the era of hegemonic rule by the United States, and established a renewed multipolar order that is bringing about existential threats and new opportunities for genuine global collaboration and human benefit.

The book itself is written with a simple framework. Each chapter relies on subsections that he constructs predominately from a handful of popular but important secondary sources, including books by Edward O. Wilson, Jared Diamond, Sven Beckett, and Alfred Crosby. In many ways, most of the book is not covering new ground. With the exception of those in his concluding chapters, Sachs's arguments about each age have already been made by historians who carried out much more in-depth research on the topics. Sachs incorporates a myriad of useful maps and graphs from other secondary sources and digital databases that highlight his arguments, especially about geography, urbanization, population growth, and the relatively recent decline of extreme poverty. Each chapter ends with a "some lessons" conclusion that provides quick summaries of his overarching themes. If there is an issue to be made with them, it is that they fail to relate to the conclusions of other chapters or to the overarching arguments. Sachs struggles to show clear connections between the lessons of each era and to his prescriptions for the twenty-first century except for the simple but important conclusion he makes in the introduction and conclusion: that the past has been full of war, greed, and poverty, but has also shown a clear tendency toward greater global interconnection.

The majority of the book casts a powerful shadow over his vision for a future of democratic global collaboration, egalitarian wealth distribution, and just, peaceful, and sustainable societies. He ends the book with "we are out of synch, out of kilter. Yet we also have our capacities to reason and to cooperate, formed on the African savanna more than a hundred thousand years ago. We have a much clearer understanding today of our common interests. Our greatest hope is to use lessons of history and of our common human nature to forge a new era of cooperation at the global scale" (214). And Sachs highlights well how greater interconnection, collaboration, and wealth production have resulted in real gains in reducing poverty and increasing the quality of life for most people in the past century. People are more educated about each other and our mutual problems than ever before. But it is hard to look past the opening sentence of the same concluding chapter: "Each age of globalization has given rise to new tensions and wars" (195). Most of these conflicts have been terrifying, and the potential for immense destruction is greater than ever. Tribalism, wars, and greed have been the norms. Being off kilter is not new for humanity. He is

saying, hey, let's not keep doing that, especially not now when things are so fragile and our ability to annihilate each other is so high and our ability to communicate with each other is so obvious. Sounds great. But he demonstrates that history shows this call to action to be a tall order. Still, he is not wrong about the possibility being here and now. Our mutual understanding of each other and of our communal fragility and potential is clearer now than ever before, and that is mostly due to the societal and technological results of globalization.

Ultimately, Sachs provides a brief and useful work that sums up important conclusions about how people became more interconnected and how geography, technologies, and institutions intertwined to influence the outcomes of different epochs of human development. He may not connect these eras as thoroughly as could be done, but the work is nonetheless thoughtful and a worthwhile attempt at synthesis. It is also an estimable appeal for change. People would do well to pay heed to his fears and aspirations.

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