Westerners on both the left and right overwhelmingly conflate globalisation with Westernisation and presume that the global economy is a pure Western-creation. Taking on the traditional Eurocentric Big Bang theory, or the ‘expansion of the West’ narrative, this book reveals the multicultural origins of globalisation and the global economy, not so as to marginalise the West but to show how it has long been embedded in complex interconnections and co-constitutive interactions with non-Western actors/agents and processes. The central empirical theme is the role of Indian structural power that was derived from Indian cotton textile exports. Indian structural power organised the first (historical-capitalist) global economy between 1500 and c.1850 and performed a vital, albeit indirect, role in the making of Western empire, industrialisation and the second (modern-capitalist) global economy. These textiles underpinned the complex inter-relations between Africa, West/Central/East/Southeast Asia, the Americas and Europe that collectively drove global economic development forward.

John M. Hobson is Professor of Politics & International Relations at the University of Sheffield and is a Fellow of the British Academy. He has previously written eight books, including *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), and *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).
Multicultural Origins of the Global Economy

Beyond the Western-Centric Frontier

John M. Hobson

University of Sheffield
In memoriam:
Tim and Nora Hobson, my life mentors
Yves Laframboise, my alter-life mentor
Lily (L. H. M.) Ling and John Atkinson Hobson, critics of racism, my academic mentors
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته
שלום עליכם
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Figures</th>
<th>page ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Mapping a New Global Political Economy: Taking Stock for the Journey Ahead 1

### Part I  Multicultural Origins of the First (Historical Capitalist) Global Economy, 1500–1850

2 Going Global 1.0: Chinese Agency in the Making of the First Global Economy 43

3 The Afro-Indian Pivot (I): Indian Structural Power and the Global Atlantic System 81

4 The Afro-Indian Pivot (II): Entangled Agencies and the Power of Africans, Indians and West Asian Muslims 110

5 Entangled Indo-European Agencies: The Implications of Indian Structural Power 130

6 Indian Merchant-Financial Capitalists: Navigating beyond the Western-centric Sea Frontier 151

### Part II  What Was Global about the First Global Economy, 1500–c. 1850?

7 Countering the Eurocentric Rejection of the First Global Economy (I): Unveiling Global Structural Properties 167

8 Countering the Eurocentric Rejection of the First Global Economy (II): Unveiling Global Historical Capitalism 200
Part III  Empire and the First Global Economy in the Making of Modern Industrial Capitalism, 1500–1800

9 The Global Atlantic Production Driver and the Imperial Primitive Accumulation of British Capital 239

10 The Global Atlantic Consumption Driver and British Late-Developmental Agency in Global Uneven and Combined Development 274

Part IV  The Second Great Divergence, 1600–1800: Differing ‘Developmental Architectures’ in Global Contexts

11 Why Britain Initiated a Cotton Industrialisation and Why India and China Did Not 317

12 Why Britain Initiated an Iron and Steel Industrialisation and Why India (Mysore) and China Did Not 353

Part V  Rehabilitating and Provincialising Western Imperialism: Afro-Asians inside and outside the Shadow of Empire

13 Multicultural Origins of the Second (Modern Capitalist) Global Economy: Unveiling the ‘Multicultural Contact Zone’, c. 1850—c. 1940 395

14 Varieties of Global Economy: From Historical to Modern Capitalism, c. 1500–2020 433

Appendix 1: Guesstimating the Size of the Trade in Indian Cotton Textiles in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries 456

Appendix 2: Estimating the Size of the Revenues Generated by All Atlantic-based Colonial-related Activities that Potentially Funded British Industrial Investment 461

Bibliography 464

Index 497
Figures

2.1 ‘Developmental architectures’ and the great trade regime divergence, post-1684: China versus Britain  page 72
3.1 The global silver/gold trading system in the first global economy  87
3.2 Indian cotton textiles in the dodecagonal (twelve-sided) global ‘super-commodity chain’  96
3.3 The seven-sided (heptagonal) African slave trade system  106
8.1 The overlapping relations of the three primary components of global historical capitalism  210
8.2 The three-layered architecture of global historical capitalism  212
9.1 The ‘Global Atlantic production driver’ of Britain’s cotton industrialisation  243
10.1 The ‘Global Atlantic consumption driver’ of Britain’s cotton industrialisation  285
10.2 Chinese water-powered hydraulic blowing engine for metallurgy  306
10.3 Cort’s iron puddling process (post-1784) and the Ancient Chinese puddling process (c. first century ce)  307
11.1 British and Chinese ‘developmental architectures’ in the global context of uneven development  319
11.2 The Chinese water-powered big spinning frame for ramie  327
12.1 British and Mysorean ‘developmental architectures’ in the global context of uneven development  354
13.1 Indian cotton textile consumption: domestic production relative to British machine-made textile imports in the nineteenth century  401
14.1 A simplified schematic of the Afro-Indian global cotton whip of necessity as a driver of Britain’s cotton industrialisation  438
14.2 The three-layered architecture of historical global and modern global capitalism  439
14.3 Historical capitalist global and modern capitalist global economies  441
14.4 Continuities between the first and second global economies  446

ix
# Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>My non-Eurocentric antidote to Western-centrism (Eurocentrism and critical Eurofetishism)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Atlantic-sourced profits and revenues in Britain’s industrialisation as percentage of British domestic investment (gross fixed capital formation)</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>The costs of Britain’s major imperial and imperial-related wars, 1689–1815</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This book has been thirty-seven years in the making and is the culmination of much that I have learned in that time. It took me on an odyssey that returned me to the second year of my undergraduate studies in Political Economy, when I was first introduced to the original Marxist debate on the transition from feudalism to capitalism. And from there I moved forward in time through my Political Sociology MSc on to my historical–sociological PhD years of study and thence into the world of International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy, all the while developing ideas, themes and issues that would come to fruition in this book. There are obviously far too many names that I owe a debt to in the early years, but I remain deeply grateful to Monika Beutel, Alan Hooper, Tom Nossiter, Linda Weiss and Michael Mann.

Moving forward to the last decade I would like to express my sincerest thanks to members of my current Sheffield department who have in so many ways provided help, support and advice to me over the many years that I have spent researching and writing this book. I am privileged to work in a department whose profile in political economy is world leading. From the pioneers of ‘New Political Economy’ and the original directors of the two world-leading political economy research centres (PERC and subsequently SPERI), Tony Payne and Andrew Gamble, through to its present and equally impressive leadership under Colin Hay and Genevieve LeBaron, as well as numerous and highly impressive members of SPERI including Andrew Baker, Matt Bishop, Graham Harrison, Andy Hindmoor, Scott Lavery, Allister McGregor, Owen Parker, Nicola Phillips, Liam Stanley and Burak Tansel, I have learned a great deal, some of which is contained in this book. I am also most grateful to a number of my IR colleagues for the many conversations, advice and kind support they have provided me, including Ross Bellaby, Ruth Blakeley, Ben Docherty, Adrian Gallagher, Jonna Nyman, Simon Rushton, Lisa Stampnitzky, Joanna Tidy, Joe Turner, Peter Verovšek and, above all, Jonathan Joseph, Burak Tansel and Helen Turton.
Regarding the last five years of intensive research and writing, I want to thank a number of people who provided excellent advice on particular parts of the manuscript: Audrey Alejandro, Genevieve LeBaron, Michelle LeBaron, Burak Tansel, Bryony Vince and Peer Vries. Following on from the tragic passing of Lily (L. H. M.) Ling, Bryony has joined me as co-editor in the Rowman & Littlefield International Book series, ‘Global Dialogues: Non-Eurocentric Visions of the Global’. Bryony is following in Lily’s giant footsteps … so no pressure then! I also feel that this book is in keeping with the core theme of the series that Lily and I set up along with the excellent help provided by Anna Reeve and, more recently, by Dhara Snowden at R&LI. Warm thanks also go to David Blaney and Kaveh Yazdani who read significant chunks of the manuscript and provided timely and invaluable feedback.

Special thanks go to my brilliant PhD student, Zhang Shizhi, with whom I have had the wonderful pleasure of engaging in our shared, quirky interest in China’s economic history. I’ve deeply enjoyed our utterly fascinating and absorbing conversations on the seemingly endless historical ins and outs of China’s foreign trade and cotton textile industry in the pre-1911 era. Moreover, his unflinching support and extraordinarily generous help in translating many Chinese books and archival documents that I have relied upon is equally deeply appreciated. Warm thanks also go to Benjamin de Carvalho and Halvard Leira given that parts of the research for this book have been made possible through support from the ‘Privateers and the Sea (EMPRISE)’ Project at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), funded by the Research Council of Norway through Grant Number 262657.

Above all, I am enormously grateful to four kind souls – three of whom are Alex Anievas, Eric Helleiner and Andrew Linklater. Not only did they most generously give up their time to read the entirety of the manuscript but, in aggregate, their input has served to improve the book immeasurably and, mercifully, saved me from making various howlers. The fourth kind soul is Lily (L. H. M.) Ling, from whom I have learned so many things postcolonial – so much more than she had the personal capacity of ever realising let alone acknowledging. Her departure is as much a loss for IR as it is personally, professionally and intellectually for me. I believe that her irrepressible spirit weaves its way across the pages of this book, even if she might still have taken issue with some of what I argue here … in her own inimitable way, of course! Her soul has whispered gently in my ear throughout the writing of this book, though neither she nor any of the other people mentioned here should be held responsible for the final product.
Deep thanks go to David Farrow, above all for his friendship but also for his heroic computer skills and efforts, which quite literally saved the book manuscript when my old computer died on me late in the day. Not many things shake my current Head of Department (HoD), Andy Hindmoor, though this one might well have, had it not been for David’s technological wizardry! And special thanks go to Andy for helping me navigate (and navigating me) through the rapids of gaining the time to get this book over the finishing line, and whose patience and tenacity in the whole process is as much appreciated as it was truly impressive. The same thanks go to our previous, equally as brilliant, HoD, Nicola Phillips, for the exact same reason. In this vein too, I also want to acknowledge my debt to John Haslam in the Edinburgh Building at Cambridge University Press who has remained especially patient and helpful throughout, for which I am no less truly grateful. Special thanks also go to the two anonymous readers for their invaluable suggestions on how to improve the manuscript. Thanks too go to Toby Ginsberg and Robert Judkins at CUP as well as to Tim Hyde at Sunrise Setting for overseeing the index. And, in this production context, I want to express my deepest thanks to Teena Lawrence for her heroic efforts and for going way beyond the call of duty in steering this book through to publication, for which I am humbly grateful.

Last, but not least, my most heartfelt thanks go to my family for their support – Evangeline, Gabby, Michael, Olivia and, above all, my partner Celia – for their, albeit increasingly but quite understandably fraying, patience in the face of my long absences, given the seemingly endless trials and tribulations in bringing this book to completion. I promise to make it up to you … honestly!