**Preface: Using this book.**

Both Globalization and Sustainability are controversial concepts. The debate around these topics is highly polarized and despite the widespread use – and misuse- of both terms there is still little consensus, for instance, on what we mean by globalization and sustainability, for how long globalization has been in existence (if at all)[[1]](#footnote-1), and how definitions of sustainability can be translated into policy and business practice.[[2]](#footnote-2) Let alone there is consensus on what should be the priorities in sustainable policy, how cross-border sustainability challenges such as climate change can be addressed[[3]](#footnote-3), or whether globalization is a negative force for sustainable development and to what extent can be regulated or it is just inevitable.[[4]](#footnote-4),[[5]](#footnote-5)This book aims not to provide definitive definitions nor to bring closure to debates but instead to approach the subject acknowledging its complexity and dynamic nature, exploring the main ideas, ethical principles, actors and processes driving the growth and development of the international economy and its unsteady transition to a more globalized and struggling more sustainable economy. This perspective allows us to foreground many of the ‘myths’ and arguments surrounding globalization and sustainable businesses.

Global Business and Sustainability: is primarily intended for students taken modules in international business courses or corporate sustainability at the undergraduate or MBA level. Our goal in writing this book has been to provide an introductory text to understand the role of corporations in the global economy from a sustainable development perspective. We believe that a common deficiency in many texts in international business is to ignore or downplay the relationships between economic processes and sustainability, as if climate change and exhaustion of non-renewable resources had no consequences for business. Similarly, many books in sustainable business have paid insufficient attention to debates on globalization and the challenges of governance in the global economy and its implications for sustainable business. We attempt to address these omissions and aim to provide students with an overall picture of what it means being a sustainable business in today’s global economy.

The link between the chapters is the challenge of global progress towards sustainable development. It gives a read thread for themes as the "alleged world success" of the market economy, the need for global governance to achieve more welfare worldwide, the inherent global nature of the sustainability problem, the role of business in the dissemination of globalization and the implications of “more globalization” for the success of sustainability transitions. For rational policy, the agenda is clear: Global collaboration to achieve more equality, allocating external costs of polluting activities, investing in renewable energy and changing consumption patterns.[[6]](#footnote-6) But rational politics are an ideal concept. Vested interests and the dependency on past investment, infrastructure and past thinking about better paths to progress constrain our ability to change inertial and inefficient practice[[7]](#footnote-7), particularly the overreliance in oil and coal exploitation. The naturalist E.O Wilson concluded its essay In Search of Nature (1996) wondering if Humanity is suicidal.[[8]](#footnote-8) If the answer is yes, are we like lemmings blindly rushing on a pre-defined path of “progress” towards global suicidal development? This book has a moderately optimistic outlook. Human beings, with their natural habits of greed, and aggression, but also respect, appreciation of fairness and empathy, have made progress towards sustainable development. There is still much to be done but the economic crisis has provided a unique window of opportunity for countries and organizations to try new economic and environmental policy and business models[[9]](#footnote-9). Struggling progress seems to encapsulate the transition towards global sustainable development

The biggest challenge in this book was the definition of its content boundaries, with the number of themes to be discussed restricted by necessity and parsimony. Any book on either sustainable business or business in the global economy must embrace a variety of different subjects and disciplines and must, of necessity, leave outside its boundaries some relevant concepts and topics. Our rationale in selecting what to include, was to provide a common base for international business courses and sustainable business courses, and we hope more specialized courses will delve deeper in the concepts here presented. For that reason the structure of the book is wide and covers many topics in a way that requires no previous knowledge of economy. The clear choice from the beginning was to span a variety of concepts and trends; laying out with broad brush strokes the conceptual foundations of sustainability and the economics and politics of cross-border trade and investment at the macro, meso and micro-level. Understanding is further aided by the introduction of relevant theoretical perspectives providing macro level conceptual foundations to identify trends and challenges in the Global Economy and Sustainable Development. The book has a distinctive multi-disciplinary approach drawing on economic, historical, sociological, management and geopolitical theories. Preferential attention is given to the role of cross-border aspects of market economies – particularly international trade and foreign direct investment- as a driving force in the integration of developing countries into the globalisation process. The consequences of globalisation in relation to the environment, social inequalities and poverty are also examined and other measures of welfare studied, highlighting the contribution of business models to global governance issues.

The four chapters in first part of the book are a primer written to give business students a macro-level understanding of main characteristics, ideologies and debates shaping the economic, political, and social context in which global sustainable business take place. Chapter 1 introduces two distinctive features of our times: the growing challenge of economic inequality and the rise of China and other developing countries as world powers (Chapter 1). Chapters 2, 3 and 4 examine contemporary implications of three great conceptual breakthroughs, which interwoven to provide the fabric of our current global economy: market economies, good governance, and social capital. Chapter 2 focus on the global dominance and regional varieties of market economy (Chapter 2), Chapter 3 analyses the principles and challenges of Good Governance, Chapter 4 completes the analysis of foundational concepts providing insights into the ethical and psychological underpinnings of life in modern society.

The four chapters in the second part of the book wave together concepts developed in the first part in the examination of two of the most powerful “new” ideas -informing debates on politics, economics, development and society- that developed out of the conceptual foundations discussed previously. Such ideas are Sustainability and Globalization. Chapters 5 and 6 examine Sustainability and its macro-level implications for the Global Economy. Chapter 5 examines what is meant by Sustainability and what are the main themes and principles embedded in debates, Chapter 6 bringing together all the concepts discussed in the book to this point; to understand how sustainability and market economies can be made compatible through enhanced governance and leveraged social capital. Chapters 7 and 8 examine Globalization and its macro-level implications for Sustainability. Chapter 7 first discusses differences between Globalization and other global economic processes such as neoliberalism and internationalization, then presents the supranational institutions to which globalization has given rise, the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Chapter 8 discusses the implications of Globalization, Internationalization and neoliberalism for Sustainable Development, with special attention on the unintended impacts of Global Institutions, consequences on inequality and the governance of globalization.

The four chapters in the third part of the book build on the first two parts to explore business (meso-level) implications of notions of ‘globalization’ and sustainability. To this end, chapters 9 to 11 explore a selection of meso/micro level business concepts that we think essential to address the challenges of developing sustainable global businesses contributing to the governance of globalization in collaboration with states: CSR, global supply chain and business strategy We end the book with a theme that summarises our overall approach: the transition towards sustainable development as a dynamic and reflexive process of collectively managed creative destruction of past path dependency. A process where citizens, government, business and supranational institutions are closely intertwined in the creation of a new playing field where companies can make more sustainable products

At the end of the book, students should be in a position to appreciate the genuine magnitude and significance of global economic forces, principles and processes for global sustainability, national economies, industries and firms.

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