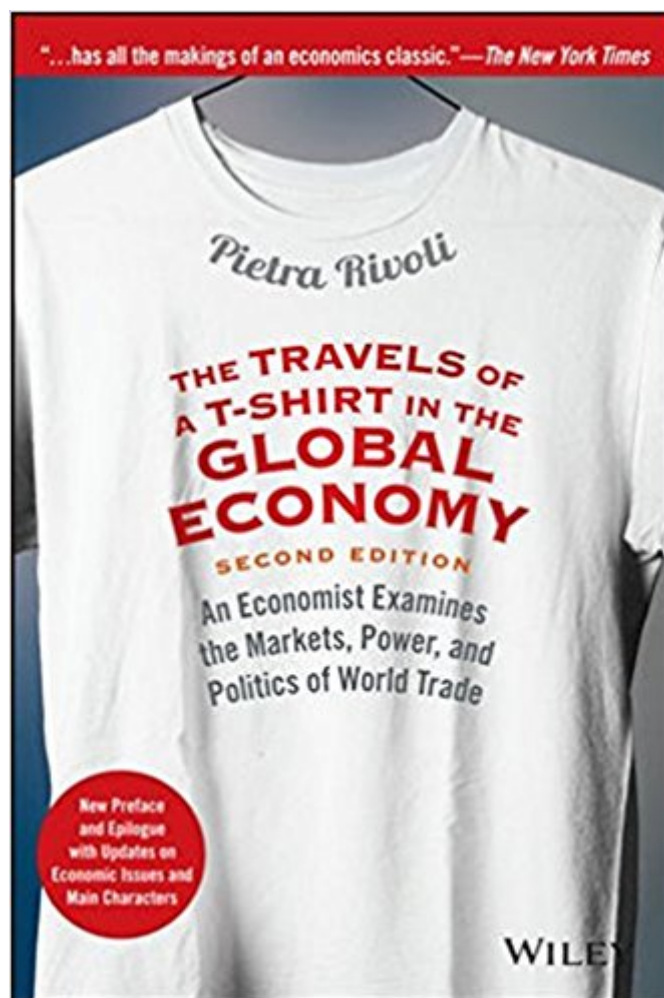


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# The Travels Of A T-Shirt In The Global Economy: An Economist Examines The Markets, Power, And Politics Of World Trade. New Preface And Epilogue With Updates On Economic Issues And Main Characters





## Synopsis

The keys to global business success, as taught by a T-shirt's journey *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy* is a critically-acclaimed narrative that illuminates the globalization debates and reveals the key factors to success in global business. Tracing a T-shirt's life story from a Texas cotton field to a Chinese factory and back to a U.S. storefront before arriving at the used clothing market in Africa, the book uncovers the political and economic forces at work in the global economy. Along the way, this fascinating exploration addresses a wealth of compelling questions about politics, trade, economics, ethics, and the impact of history on today's business landscape. This new printing of the second edition includes a revised preface and a new epilogue with updates through 2014 on the people, industries, and policies related to the T-shirt's life story. Using a simple, everyday T-shirt as a lens through which to explore the business, economic, moral, and political complexities of globalization in a historical context, *Travels* encapsulates a number of complex issues into a single identifiable object that will strike a chord with readers as they:

- Investigate the sources of sustained competitive advantage in different industries
- Examine the global economic and political forces that explain trade patterns between countries
- Analyze complex moral issues related to globalization and international business
- Discover the importance of cultural and human elements in international trade

This story of a simple product illuminates the many complex issues which businesspeople, policymakers, and global citizens are touched by every day.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

PRAISE FOR THE TRAVELS OF A T-SHIRT IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY "Engrossingâ | [Rivoli] goes wherever the T-shirt goes and there are surprises around every corner....full of memorable characters and vivid scenes." &#151;Time "An engaging and illuminating saga â | Rivoli follows her T-shirt along its route, but that is like saying that Melville follows his whale â | Her nuanced and fair-minded approach is all the more powerful for eschewing the pretense of ideological absolutism, and her telescopic look through a single industry has all the makings of an economics classic." &#151;The New York Times "Rarely is a business book so well written that one would gladly stay up all night to finish it. Rivoli's The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy is just such a page-turner." &#151;CIO magazine "Succeeds admirablyâ |T-shirts may not have changed the world, but their story is a useful account of how free trade and protectionism certainly have." &#151;Financial Times "A readable and evenhanded treatment of the complexities of world tradeâ | As Rivoli repeatedly makes clear, there is absolutely nothing free about free trade except the slogan." &#151;San Francisco Chronicle "A fascinating exploration of the history, economics, and politics of world tradeâ |The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy is a thought-provoking yarn that exhibits the ugly, the bad, and the good of globalization, and points to the unintended positive consequences of the clash between proponents and opponents of free trade." &#151;Fort Worth Star-Telegram This second edition includes a revised preface and new epilogue with updates through 2014 on the people, industries, and policies related to the t-shirt's life story.

PIETRA RIVOLI, PHD, is Professor at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business, where she specializes in international business, finance, and social issues in business. Travels of a T-Shirt has won numerous awards and has been translated into fourteen languages.

This book was amazing! I had to buy this for an international economics class, and as such, was unsure of what it would be like. I mean, it was a book about t-shirts, what could possibly be so interesting, right? Well, as it turns out, a lot of things. You have no idea what kinds of crazy regulations, politics, social stigmas and drama can go into making a t-shirt. I think the most interesting thing was learning about the cotton industry in Texas and how the politics and innovation behind it makes Texas the number one cotton producer in the world. Considering the climate in the region where it's grown, it would seem highly unlikely for that to be true. But that's where the science and innovation comes through. It's so fascinating. Being able to see just how complex making a shirt in the international market can be; from growing cotton to when you purchase and even what happens after you donate, shows (on a small scale), just how complicated the

international economy is. This book is a wonderful read and recommend it for anyone who as any interest in the global economy.

The strongest tool in the novel, is choosing a T-shirt to drive the narrative which made it possible to learn about Texas Cotton, the Chinese hukou system, and African clothing markets all at once; the book flows entertainingly well while retaining pertinent facts and points. One area of improvement could have been a clearer stance on whether globalization is better or worse for the general well-being of the world. However, the thorough nature of exploring all the counter arguments and points makes for a compelling economic and political profile of a commodity that few people will ever think about. Keeping it as neutral as possible helps readers feel like learners and not indoctrinates. In the end though, I think it is pretty clear from the conclusion and epilogue that Pietra Rivoli seems to believe growing interdependence with more open communication would be a strength, not a weakness. In the conclusion as she meditates on her past experience as a global labor activist, she ponders Libanius's words over trade as a source of bonding and sharing; although you can tell she may have her reservations about some injustices in the world due to globalization, she also sees the potential. Ultimately, I think she believes that a rising tide does not have to sink any boats as long as the process of globalization is handled ethically and gradually, with more consumer appreciation and education. The strongest tool in the novel, is choosing a T-shirt to drive the narrative which made it possible to learn about Texas Cotton, the Chinese hukou system, and African clothing markets all at once; the book flows entertainingly well while retaining pertinent facts and points. One area of improvement could have been a clearer stance on whether globalization is better or worse for the general well-being of the world. However, the thorough nature of exploring all the counter arguments and points makes for a compelling economic and political profile of a commodity that few people will ever think about. Keeping it as neutral as possible helps readers feel like learners and not indoctrinates. In the end though, I think it is pretty clear from the conclusion and epilogue that Pietra Rivoli seems to believe growing interdependence with more open communication would be a strength, not a weakness. In the conclusion as she meditates on her past experience as a global labor activist, she ponders Libanius's words over trade as a source of bonding and sharing; although you can tell she may have her reservations about some injustices in the world due to globalization, she also sees the potential. Ultimately, I think she believes that a rising tide does not have to sink any boats as long as the process of globalization is handled ethically and gradually, with more consumer appreciation and education.

Having read, studied, and written on many sides of the trade debates, I've never before encountered such a non-ideological, open-minded account of the human effects of today's international trade regime. As a student of economics, I appreciated her focus on the important technical details of land tenure, payment, collective organization, and the other systems that make all the difference in how markets function--or don't. My only complaint was that, from an academic standpoint, Rivoli's book occasionally lacked diverse sources or relied overly much on a single author (Landes' wonderful book, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, comes to mind) to the exclusion of other sources. However, given her extensive travel and interviews, it's hard to fault Rivoli with shoddy research and, overall, I'd say this book fills the notable gap between neoliberal absolutists and those who overlook the prosperity that free markets can provide. Not to mention it's a fantastic read. I'd recommend this book to a wide range of readers, from those who are curious about what this whole "globalization" thing is really all about, to those studying international affairs and economics who want a methodical, and generally rigorous, explanation of the mechanisms and effects behind world trade today.

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