The Power of Place

Why the world is more diverse and multifaceted than mainstream media would have us think.
Thomas Friedman

Background

- Born: July 20, 1953 St. Louis Park, Minnesota
- Residence: Bethesda, Maryland
- Occupation: Popular Author/Columnist/Speaker for The New York Times
- Education: B.A. from Brandeis (1971)
  - M.A.: University of Oxford on a Marshall scholarship,
    M.Phil. (Ph.D.) in Middle Eastern Studies

Works:

- 1981: United Press International London; Beirut, Lebanon
- 1982: The New York Times as a reporter, and was re-dispatched to Beirut at the start of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.
- 1984 to 1988: NYTimes Reporter in Jerusalem, and received a second Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the First Palestinian Intifada.
- 1990: First Book, From Beirut to Jerusalem, describing his experiences in the Middle East.
- 1992: Friedman becomes the NYTimes White House correspondent
- 2000: Book: Lexus and the Olive Tree
The World is Flat

- **Book:** *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*

- **Arguments:**
  - “World Flattening” = A *metaphor* for viewing the world as a *level playing field* in terms of commerce, where *all people* and economic competitors have an *equal opportunity*
  - Flattening also represents a *perceptual shift* required for countries, companies and individuals to remain competitive in a global market.
  - Historical and geographical divisions are becoming increasingly irrelevant.
Globalization 1.0: A period in which countries and governments were the main protagonists (1492-1800s)

Globalization 2.0: A period in which multinational companies led the way in driving global integration (1820-2000)

Globalization 3.0: Our current period in which international market flattening has occurred as a result of a convergence of personal computer penetration worldwide with fiber-optic micro cable with the rise of work flow software. (2000+→)
Friedman’s 7 Major “Flatteners”

1. **Collapse of Berlin Wall** --11/’89: The event not only symbolized the end of the Cold war, it allowed people from other side of the wall to join the economic mainstream.

2. **Web Browsers --Internet Explorer/Netscape/Safari**: Browsers and the Web broadened the audience for the Internet from its roots as a communications medium used primarily by 'early adopters and geeks' to something that made the Internet accessible to everyone from five-year-olds to ninety-five-year olds.

3. **Open sourcing**: Communities uploading and collaborating on online projects. Examples include open source software, blogs, and Wikipedia. Friedman considers the phenomenon "the most disruptive force of all."

4. **Outsourcing**: Friedman argues that outsourcing has allowed companies to split service and manufacturing activities into components which can be subcontracted and performed in the most efficient, cost-effective way.

5. **Off-shoring**: The internal relocation of a company's manufacturing or other processes to a foreign land in order to take advantage of less costly operations there. China's entrance in the WTO allowed for greater competition in the playing field. Now countries such as Malaysia, Mexico, Brazil must compete against China and each other to have businesses offshore to them.

6. **the In-forming TECHNOLOGIES**: Google, Yahoo, Baidu (China), Yandex (Russia) and other search engines are the prime example. "Never before in the history of the planet have so many people-on their own-had the ability to find so much information about so many things and about so many other people."

7. **The TECHNOLOGY “Steroids“**: Personal digital devices like mobile phones, iPods, personal digital assistants, instant messaging, and voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).
Critiques of Friedman and his Arguments

**Economic Class:** Elite of the Elite

- Friedman’s individual Net worth: ~$50 million USD
- Wife: Ann Bucksbaum heiress to General Growth Properties (shopping mall development) Forbes estimates Bucksbaum family’s assets at $4.1 billion, including about 18.6 million square meters of mall space.
- Friedman’s home in Bethesda, Maryland. The July 2006 issue of Washingtonian reported that they own "a palatial 11,400-square-foot house, currently valued at $9.3 million, on a 7½-acre parcel just blocks from Bethesda Country Club."

**The Sheraton/Hilton Effect:**

**Free Trade Fundamentalism:**

- "high priest" of free-trade fundamentalism.
- Interview with Friedman: "I was speaking out in Minnesota -- my hometown, in fact -- and guy stood up in the audience, said, 'Mr. Friedman, is there any free trade agreement you'd oppose?' I said, 'No, absolutely not.' I said, 'You know what, sir? I wrote a column supporting the CAFTA, the Caribbean Free Trade initiative. I didn't even know what was in it. I just knew two words: free trade.'"
Harm DeBlij--Arguments

- Friedman’s “Flat World” is **ABSURD**!
- Instead, the world has a Rough→ **REALLY ROUGH** Landscape.
- **Geographic PLACE** **ALWAYS** plays a **HUGE** determining factor in your opportunities
- **LARGE portions of the world’s population** (over 50%) are **NOT** part of the Global Village, **nor do they even know what it is**.
- **One WORLD THEORY** (and **SMALL WORLD** theory) is **ABSURD**!
  We are geographically and culturally extremely diverse—Economics, Health, Education, Linguistics, Daily life, etc.
Not-So Small World
Arguments AGAINST a Small World Theory

1. Linguistic Diversity
2. Economic$ Living wage vs. Disposable Income
3. International Travel Barriers
4. Limited Access to Electricity
5. Access to Clean Water
6. Cultural Diversity and Cultural Complexity
7. Limited Access to Education/Literacy
8. Gender Equality
Global Core, Periphery, Barricades
Linguistic Diversity

There are approximately **6,900 living languages** generally recognized today. Of these, 6,000 have registered population figures.

List of the top 10 languages:

1. Mandarin 885 million speakers
2. Spanish 332 million speakers
3. English 322 million speakers
4. Bengali 189 million speakers
5. Hindi 182 million speakers
6. Arabic 175 million speakers**
7. Portuguese 170 million speakers
8. Russian 170 million speakers
9. Japanese 125 million speakers
10. German 98 million speakers
11. Wu 77 million speakers

**There are many different types of Arabic. Egyptian Arabic is the most widely spoken with approximately 42 million speakers.**
## Literacy and Illiteracy

**UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)**

**Adult (15+) Literacy Rates and Illiterate Population by Region and Gender for 2000-2004**

April 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Adult Literacy Rate (%)</th>
<th>Adult Illiterate Population, 2000-2004</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Lit</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>87.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>71.6</td>
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<td>South America</td>
<td>90.7</td>
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<td>Asia</td>
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<td>85.9</td>
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<td>Europe</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>99.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>94.2</td>
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<td>World Religions</td>
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<td><strong>Four largest religions</strong></td>
<td>Adherents</td>
<td>% of world population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>2,331,509,000</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>1,619,314,000</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>1,100,000,000</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>1,083,800,358</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>690,847,214</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Different Belief Systems*
Global Access to Electricity

- Millions of people who lack adequate electricity
- Millions of people who have no electricity
Global Access to Clean Water

% of the population with access to improved drinking water (2000)

- more than 90%
- 76% to 90%
- 51% to 75%
- 1% to 50%
- no data available

About a billion people do not have access to safe drinking water. That’s one out of nine people in the world.

The average distance that women in Africa and Asia walk to collect water is 3.7 miles.

By 2025 at the rate we are going, it is estimated that two thirds of the world will be living with water scarcity or total water deprivation.
Global Life Expectancy
Energy Consumption Per Person, by country, 2010.

ANNUAL CONSUMPTION PER PERSON
Millions of British thermal units (Btu)

- More than 400
- 250 to 400
- 150 to 249
- 75 to 149
- 25 to 74
- 10 to 24
- 5 to 9
- < 5

1 million Btu = roughly 8 gallons of gasoline
Different Linguistic backgrounds

Figure 2.1. On the question of world language families, no scholarly agreement exists. This map shows the most uncomplicated version, with 15 language families among which the Indo-European family (which includes English) is most widely dispersed. Modified from M. Ruhlen, *A Guide to the World’s Languages* (Stanford University Press, 1987) and J. Greenberg (1963 and 1987).

themselves the “people of Han,” but their ethnic unity is countered by a linguistic map revealing more than 1400 dialects, most of them mutually incomprehensible. The number of dialects is far greater in the south than in the north, but official maps delimiting a “Northern
Globals, Locals, Mobals
Cities Powering Globalization
Women in Political Power

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Percent of Women in Parliament

- > 40
- 30-40
- 20-30
- 10-20
- 1-10
- 0
- Data not available

0 2000 4000 Kilometers
Figure 1.2. By this method of displaying the world’s population distribution, one dot represents 100,000 people. The map emphasizes the persistence of ancient, agriculture-based patterns in the World Island (Eurasia and Africa); the two largest clusters of population lie in the global periphery.
World Language Families

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World’s Wealthiest 1%

Where do the top 1% live?
Countries with the largest share of the wealthiest 47 million people

1. US: 18m
2. Japan: 4m
3. France: 3.5m
4. UK: 2.9m
5. Germany: 2.8m
6. Italy: 2.3m
7. Australia: 1.8m
8. Canada: 1.6m
9. China: 1.6m
10. Switzerland: 0.8m

7.7m more live in 28 other countries

Source: Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2014