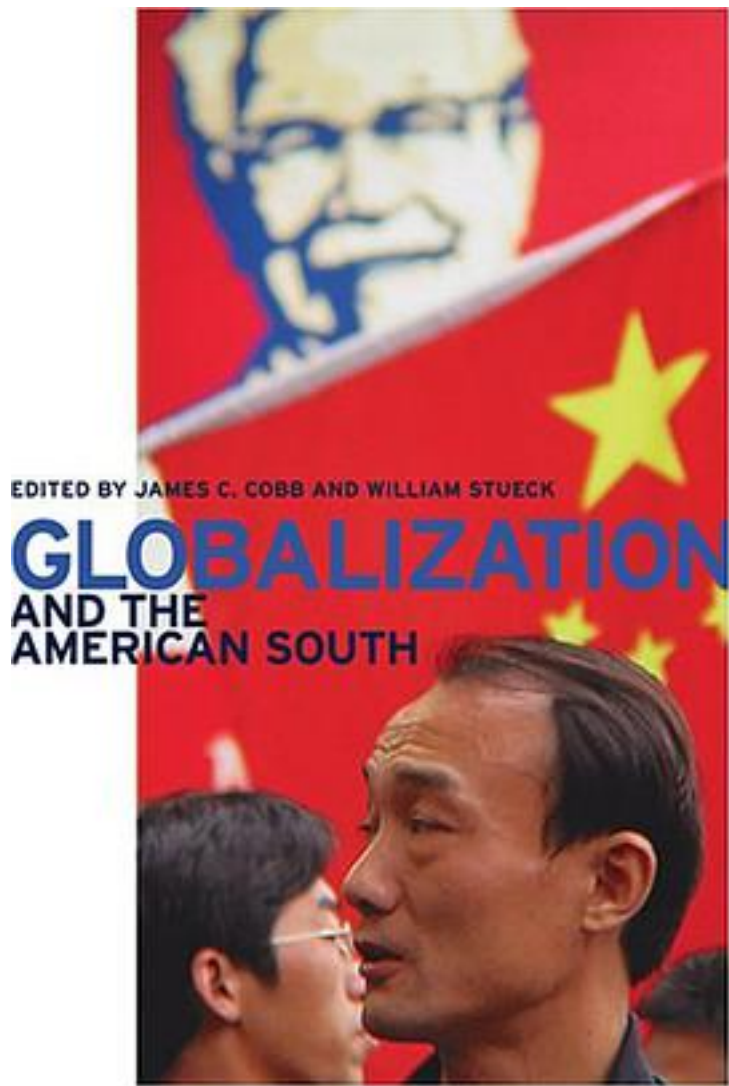


Globalization and the American South



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In 1955 the Fortune magazine list of America's largest corporations included just 18 with headquarters in the Southeast. By 2002 the number had grown to 123. In fact, the South attracted over half of the foreign businesses drawn to the United States in the 1990s. The eight original essays collected here consider this stunning dynamism in ways that help us see anew the region's place in that ever-accelerating, transnational flow of people, capital, and technology known collectively as "globalization." Moving between local and global perspectives, the essays discuss how once faraway places like Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Indian Subcontinent are now having an impact on the South. One essay, for example, looks at a range of issues behind the explosive growth of North Carolina's Latino population, which grew by almost 400 percent during the 1990s--miles ahead of the national growth percentage of 61. In another essay we learn why BMW workers in Germany, frustrated with the migration of jobs to South Carolina, refer to the American South as "our Mexico." Showing that global forces are often on both sides of the matchup--reshaping the South but also adapting to and exploiting its peculiarities--many of the essays make the point that, although the new ethnic food section at the local Winn-Dixie is one manifestation of globalization, so is the wide-ranging export of such originally southern phenomena as NASCAR and Kentucky Fried Chicken. If a single message emerges from the book, it is this: Beware of tidy accounts of worldwide integration. On one hand, globalization can play to southern shortcomings (think of the region's repute as a source of cheap labor); on the other, the influx of new peoples, customs, and ideas is poised to alter forever the South's historic black-white racial divide.

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