

Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection

In an increasingly interconnected world, the concept of friction has taken on new meaning. Once understood as a physical force that impedes movement, friction now encompasses a broader range of social, cultural, and economic factors that can hinder or facilitate global connections. In his groundbreaking ethnography, "Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection," anthropologist Arjun Appadurai explores the ways in which friction shapes the flow of people, ideas, and goods across borders.

The Ethnographic Lens

Appadurai's ethnography is based on extensive fieldwork conducted in India, the United States, and the United Kingdom. He draws on a diverse range of sources, including interviews with migrants, traders, and policymakers, as well as participant observation in a variety of settings, from global conferences to local markets. Through this immersive approach, Appadurai provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the ways in which friction manifests itself in the everyday lives of people around the world.



Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection

by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled



Five Dimensions of Friction

Appadurai identifies five key dimensions of friction that shape global connections:

- **The friction of distance:** The physical distance between places can impede the flow of people, ideas, and goods. This can be particularly significant for marginalized communities or those living in remote areas.
- **The friction of borders:** National borders can create barriers to the movement of people and goods, as well as the exchange of ideas. This can be especially challenging for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.
- **The friction of language:** Linguistic diversity can hinder communication and understanding between people from different cultures. This can be a significant barrier to global trade, cooperation, and cultural exchange.
- **The friction of culture:** Cultural differences can create misunderstandings and conflicts between people from different backgrounds. This can make it difficult to build trust and establish meaningful connections across cultural boundaries.
- **The friction of power:** Power imbalances between individuals, organizations, and nations can shape the flow of global connections. This can lead to exploitation, inequality, and conflict.

The Social Consequences of Friction

Appadurai argues that friction has profound social consequences. It can create barriers to mobility, opportunity, and cultural understanding. It can also lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and even violence. The impact of friction is particularly felt by marginalized communities, who often face multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion.

However, Appadurai also emphasizes that friction is not always a negative force. It can also create opportunities for resistance, creativity, and innovation. By understanding the ways in which friction operates, we can better address its negative consequences and harness its potential for positive change.

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In "Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection," Arjun Appadurai provides a groundbreaking analysis of the ways in which friction shapes the flow of people, ideas, and goods across borders. He argues that friction is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has both positive and negative consequences. By understanding the social, cultural, and economic dimensions of friction, we can better navigate the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly interconnected world.

Appadurai's work has far-reaching implications for a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, economics, and political science. It also offers valuable insights for policymakers, business leaders, and anyone interested in understanding the challenges and opportunities of global connection.

References

- Appadurai, A. (2013). *Friction: An ethnography of global connection*. Princeton University Press.



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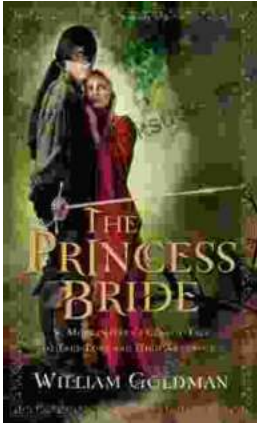
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