

Fifth Edition

# Global Issues

An Introduction



Kristen A. Hite  
John L. Seitz

WILEY Blackwell

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## *An Introduction*

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Kristen A. Hite and John L. Seitz

**WILEY** Blackwell

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## Global Issues

New to this edition, please find a Facebook page for *Global Issues*, which features updates on many of the subjects discussed in this book. Please feel welcome to visit, like, comment, and share:  
<https://www.facebook.com/GlobalIssuesHiteSeitz>

*To those who serve the needs of others – humans, animals, and plants,  
all essential parts of our lovely but endangered planet*

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# Foreword

In the 1950s and 1960s I (Seitz) went as an employee of the US government to Iran, Brazil, Liberia, and Pakistan to help them develop. A common belief in those decades was that poverty causes people to turn to communism. As an idealistic young person, I was pleased to work in a program that had the objective of helping poor nations raise their living standards. After World War II the United States was the richest and most powerful country in the world. Many countries welcomed US assistance since it was widely believed that the United States could show others how to escape from poverty.

Disillusionment came as I realized that we did not really know how to help these countries relieve their widespread poverty. The problem was much more complex and difficult than we had imagined. Also, one of the main political objectives of our foreign aid program – to help friendly, noncommunist governments stay in power – often dominated our concerns.

And more disillusionment came when I looked at my own country and realized that it had many problems of its own that had not been solved. It was called “developed” but faced major problems that had accompanied its industrialization – urban sprawl and squalor, pollution, crime, materialism, and ugliness, among others. So, I asked myself, what is development? Is it good or bad? If there are good features in it, as many people in the world believe, how do you achieve them, and how do you control or prevent the harmful features? It was questions such as these that led me to a deeper study of development and to the writing of this book.

I came to recognize that development is a concept that allows us to examine and make some sense out of the complex issues the world faces today. Many of these issues are increasingly seen as being global issues. Because the capacity human beings have to change the world – for better or for worse – is constantly growing, an understanding of global issues has become essential. The front pages of our newspapers and the evening TV news programs remind us nearly daily that we live in an age

of increasing interdependence. (The Introduction explains the creation of global issues.)

This book is an introduction to a number of complicated issues. It is only a beginning; there is much more to learn. Readers who are intrigued by a subject or point made and want to learn more about it should consult the relevant note. The note will either give some additional information or will give the source of the fact we present. Consulting this source is a good place for the reader to start his or her investigation. After each chapter a list of readings gives inquisitive readers further suggestions for articles and books that will allow them to probe more deeply. Appendix 1 gives the student some help in organizing the material the book covers and the teacher some suggestions for teaching this material. Appendix 2 offers suggestions of relevant video tapes and disks, an important and interesting resource for those who want to understand these issues more deeply. Appendix 3 gives internet sources. Many organizations on the internet now have a large amount of information related to many of the issues covered in this book. The glossary contains a definition of many of the uncommon terms used in the book.

The world is changing rapidly and significant developments have taken place in many of the topics covered in this book since the fourth edition was prepared. Climate change has become so central to development considerations that it now has its own chapter. An expanded discussion on governance reflects the increasingly apparent challenges that, even as the world increasingly understands the technical basis of global problems, make responsible choices and effective decision-making ever more important across political and temporal scales. This edition also offers new insights into the global implications of the collective impacts of consumer choices, in part through the concept of environmental footprints in an effort to link global issues with individual choices a reader can make.

Global issues can be a depressing subject as the reader learns of the many serious problems the world faces. To help counter this depression without “sugar coating” the issues, a highlighted box of an example of a positive action the reader can take will be presented in most chapters.

John L. Seitz

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