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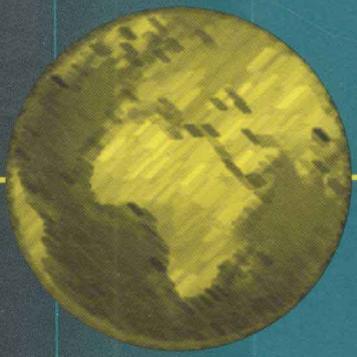

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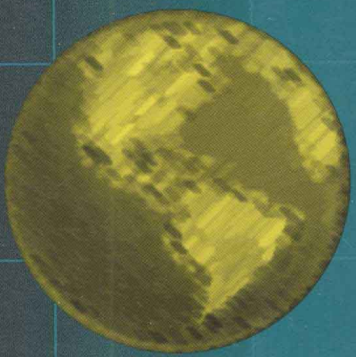

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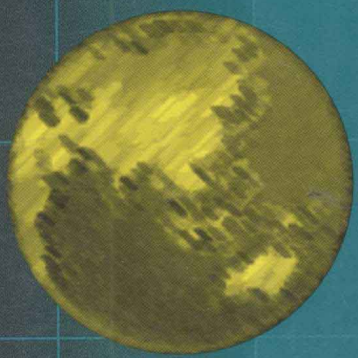

edited by

MICHAEL T. SNARR & D. NEIL SNARR

SECOND EDITION

INTRODUCING GLOBAL ISSUES

EDITED BY
MICHAEL T. SNARR
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For Ty and Ruth Shaban,
and Don and Mabel Snarr,
thanks for your love, guidance, and encouragement

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PREFACE

In the second edition of *Introducing Global Issues*, we have updated and expanded our coverage of some of the world's most pressing problems. All of the chapters reflect significant changes in the world, including those resulting from the events of September 11, 2001; additionally, a new chapter on the global environment addresses issues of biodiversity and the global commons. In response to student suggestions, we have included a list of acronyms, along with many new tables and figures. Other ideas for improvement and general comments are welcome at michael_snarr@wilmington.edu.

* * *

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to those who made this book possible. We are first and foremost indebted to our contributors for their perseverance and hard work. Getting to know them better has been a gratifying outcome of this project. Special thanks go to the staff at Lynne Rienner Publishers—and especially to Lynne Rienner, Bridget Julian, and Lesli Brooks Athanasoulis—for their outstanding encouragement and support.

We thank our global issues students at Wilmington College for asking insightful questions and demanding a readable book, along with our colleagues, who offered many useful suggestions. Joan Skidmore and her staff provided secretarial help at every step, and Jennifer Dye and Emily Herring assisted us with research and artwork. Rodney North and Colin Frake contributed their good advice to the earlier comments of Steven L. Lamy and Jeffrey Lantis.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to our family—Melissa, Ruth, Madison, Ty, and Isaiah. Your support, love, and friendship are invaluable.

—Michael T. Snarr
—D. Neil Snarr

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INTRODUCING GLOBALIZATION AND GLOBAL ISSUES

Michael T. Snarr

- Approximately 210,000 people are added to the world's population every day; that is the equivalent of 76 million people per year.
- People in more than 200 countries and territories have access to Cable News Network (CNN).
- During the 1990s, the number of undernourished people declined by approximately 40 million (UNDP 2001).
- An area of rainforest larger than a U.S. football field is destroyed every second worldwide.
- Infant mortality rate was reduced during the 1990s by over 10 percent worldwide (UNDP 2001).
- More civilians died in the twentieth century as a result of war than in the four previous centuries combined.
- Dramatic numbers of species are becoming extinct worldwide.
- More than 1 billion people live on less than one U.S. dollar per day.
- 40 million people are HIV-infected (UNAIDS 2001); approximately 11 people are infected every minute.
- Approximately 30,000 children die every day from preventable diseases.

Each of the items above is related to a global issue discussed in this book and many of them affect the reader. But what is a *global issue?* The term is used in the book to refer to two types of phenomena. First, there are those issues that are transnational, that is, they cross political boundaries (country borders). These issues affect individuals in more than one country. A clear example is air pollution produced by a factory in the United States and blown into Canada. Second, there are problems and issues that do not

necessarily cross borders but affect a large number of individuals throughout the world. Ethnic rivalries and human rights violations, for example, may occur within a single country but have a far wider impact. Thus, global issues either cross country borders or affect a vast number of people.

For the contributors to this volume, the primary goal is to introduce several of the most pressing global issues and demonstrate how strongly they are interconnected. Since these issues affect each and every one of us, we also hope to motivate the reader to learn more about these global issues.

■ IS THE WORLD SHRINKING?

There has been a great deal of discussion in recent years about globalization, which can be defined as "the intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across borders" (Holm and Sørensen 1995: 1). Evidence of globalization is seen regularly in our daily lives. In the United States, grocery stores and shops at the local mall are stocked with items produced abroad. Likewise, Nike, Los Angeles Lakers, and New York Yankees hats and T-shirts are easily found outside of the United States. In many countries outside of the United States, Britney Spears, 'N Sync, and other U.S. music groups dominate the airwaves; CNN and MTV are on television screens; and Harry Potter is at the movies. Are we moving toward a single global culture? In the words of Benjamin Barber, we are being influenced by "the onrush of economic and ecological forces that demand integration and uniformity and that mesmerize the world with fast music, fast computers, and fast food—with MTV, Macintosh, and McDonald's, pressing nations into one commercially homogeneous global network: one McWorld tied together by technology, ecology, communication, and commerce" (Barber 1992: 53).

Technology is perhaps the most visible aspect of globalization and in many ways its driving force. Communications technology has revolutionized our information systems. CNN reaches hundreds of millions of households in over 200 countries and territories throughout the world. "Computer, television, cable, satellite, laser, fiber-optic, and microchip technologies [are] combining to create a vast interactive communications and information network that can potentially give every person on earth access to every other person, and make every datum, every byte, available to every set of eyes" (Barber 1992: 58). Technology has also aided the increase in international trade and international capital flows and enhanced the spread of Western, primarily U.S., culture.

Of course the earth is not literally shrinking, but in light of the rate at which travel and communication speeds have increased, the world has in a sense become smaller. Thus, many scholars assert that we are living in a

qualitatively different time, in which humans are interconnected more than ever before. "There is a distinction between the contemporary experience of change and that of earlier generations: never before has change come so rapidly . . . on such a global scale, and with such global visibility" (CGG 1995: 12).

This seemingly uncritical acceptance of the concept of globalization and a shrinking world is not without its critics. These critics point out that labor, trade, and capital moved at least as freely, if not more so, during the second half of the nineteenth century than it does now.

Second, some skeptics argue that while interdependence and technological advancement have increased in some parts of the world, this is not true in a vast majority of the South. (The terms *the South*, *the developing world*, *the less developed countries*, and *the third world* are used interchangeably throughout this book. They refer to the poorer countries, in contrast to the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, which are referred to as *the North*, *the more developed countries*, and *the first world*.) For example, Hamid Mowlana argues that "'Global' is not 'universal'" (1995: 42). Although a small number of people in the South may have access to much of the new technology and truly live in the "global village," the large majority of the population in these countries does not. Despite the rapid globalization of the Internet, it is estimated that by 2005, only one billion (or one in six people) will have access to it (UNDP 2001). Figure 1.1 further documents the lopsided nature of Internet use in the world.

In most of the poorer countries of Africa and Asia, the number of cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people is in single digits. In contrast, for many of the developed countries, nearly half of all people use this technology (UNDP 2001). A good example of this contrast can be seen in the current war in Afghanistan. While ultramodern U.S. jets flew above Kabul, many Northern Alliance troops were entering the city on horses and bicycles.

Similarly, one can argue that information flows, a characteristic of globalization, go primarily in one direction. Even those in the South who have access to television or radio are at a disadvantage. The globalization of communication in the less developed countries typically is a one-way proposition: The people do not control any of the information; they only receive it. It is also true that worldwide the ability to control or generate broadcasts rests in the hands of a tiny minority.

While lack of financial resources is an important impediment to globalization, there are other obstacles. Paradoxically, Benjamin Barber, who argues that we are experiencing global integration via "McDonaldization," asserts we are at the same time experiencing global disintegration. The breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, as well as the great number of other ethnic and national conflicts (see Chapter 3), are cited as evidence of forces countering globalization. Many subnational groups (groups within

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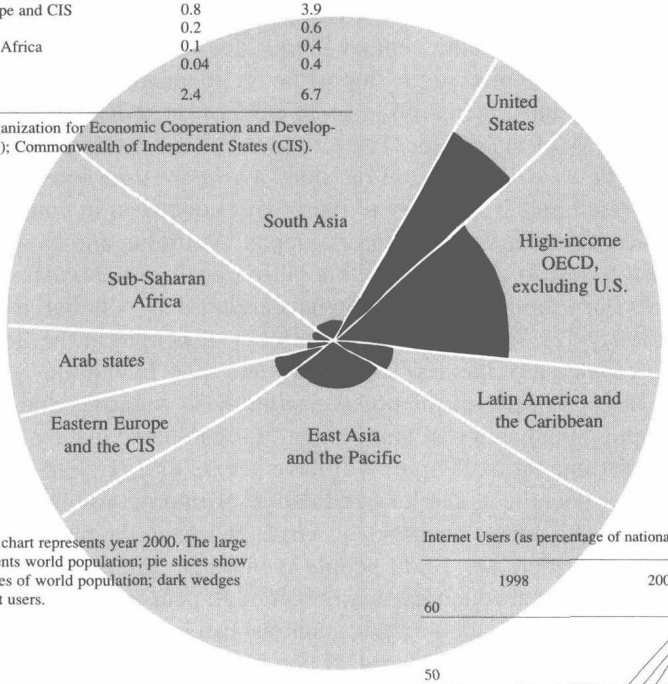
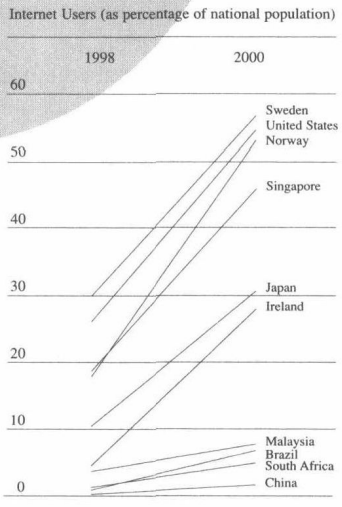
Figure 1.1 Internet Users Around the World, 1998 and 2000

	Internet Users (as percentage of population)	
	1998	2000
United States	26.3	54.3
High-income OECD (excluding U.S.)	6.9	28.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.8	3.2
East Asia and the Pacific	0.5	2.3
Eastern Europe and CIS	0.8	3.9
Arab states	0.2	0.6
Sub-Sarahan Africa	0.1	0.4
South Asia	0.04	0.4
World	2.4	6.7

Note: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).



Note: Pie chart represents year 2000. The large circle represents world population; pie slices show regional shares of world population; dark wedges show Internet users.



Source: Adapted from UN Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2001* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), Feature 2.3, p. 40.

nations) desire to govern themselves; others see threats to their religious values and identity and therefore reject the secular nature of globalization. As a result, for some, globalization

> has produced not uniformity, but a yearning for a return to non-secular values. Today, there is a rebirth of revitalized fundamentalism in all the world's major religions, whether Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Shintoism, or Confucianism. At the same time the global homogeneity has reached the airwaves, these religious tenets have reemerged as defining identities. (Mowlana 1995)

None of these criticisms mean that our contemporary time period is not different in some important aspects. There is widespread agreement that communications, trade, and capital are moving at unprecedented speeds and at volumes never before seen. These criticisms do, however, provide an important caution against overstating or making broad generalizations about the process and effects of globalization.

■ IS GLOBALIZATION GOOD OR BAD?

There are some aspects of globalization that most will agree are good (for example, the spread of medical technology) or bad (for example, increased global trade in illegal drugs). Events during the war in Afghanistan in 2001–2002 revealed the dramatic contrast between friends and foes of globalization. Due to the Taliban's rejection of many aspects of Western culture, some Afghanis apparently buried their televisions and VCRs in their backyard. When Kabul was captured by the Northern Alliance it was reported that one Afghani anxiously retrieved his TV and VCR in order to view his copy of *Titanic* (Filkins 2001). Judging whether or not globalization is good is, however, complex.

The first column of Table 1.1 identifies three areas that are affected by globalization—political, economic, and cultural—and gives some examples of aspects considered positive and negative about globalization. A key aspect of political globalization is the weakened ability of the state to control both what crosses its borders and what goes on inside them. In other words, globalization can reduce the state's *sovereignty* (the state's ability to govern matters within its borders). This can be viewed as good, because undemocratic governments are finding it increasingly difficult to control the flow of information to and from prodemocracy groups. Satellite dishes, e-mail, and the World Wide Web are three examples of technology that have eroded state sovereignty. But decreased state sovereignty also means that the state has difficulty controlling the influx of illegal drugs and unwanted immigrants, including terrorists.

Table 1.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Globalization

Effects of Globalization	Advantages	Disadvantages
Political	Weakens power of authoritarian governments	Unwanted external influence difficult to keep out
Economic	Jobs, capital, more choices for consumers	Exploitative; only benefits a few; gap between rich and poor
Cultural	Offers exposure to other cultures	Cultural imperialism

In the realm of economics, increased globalization has given consumers more choices. Also, multinational corporations are creating jobs in poor areas where people never before had such opportunities. Some critics reject these points, arguing that increased foreign investment and trade benefit only a small group of wealthy individuals and that, as a result, the gap between rich and poor grows both within countries and between countries. Related to this is the argument that many well-paying, blue-collar jobs are moving from the North to the poor countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

At the cultural level, those who view increased cultural contact as positive say that it gives people more opportunities to learn about (and purchase goods from) other cultures. But critics of cultural globalization argue that the wealthy countries are guilty of cultural imperialism—that their multibillion-dollar advertising budgets are destroying the cultures of non-Western areas, as illustrated by Avon's aggressive sales strategy in the Amazon region (Byrd 1994). The fear of cultural imperialism is certainly a key component in the animosity of some Arabs toward the United States. Other critics are increasingly fearful that more and more national languages will become extinct as foreign languages, especially English, penetrate borders.

The degree to which cultural values can be "exported" is the subject of some debate. Samuel Huntington argues that

> drinking Coca-Cola does not make Russians think like Americans any more than eating sushi makes Americans think like Japanese. Throughout human history, fads and material goods have spread from one society to another without significantly altering the basic culture of the recipient society. (Huntington 1996: 28–29)

Similarly, others argue that globalization brings only superficial change. "McDonald's may be in nearly every country, but in Japan, sushi is served alongside hamburgers. In many countries, hamburgers are not even on the menu" (Mowlana 1995: 46).

It is left to the reader to determine whether globalization is having a positive or negative effect on the issues discussed in this book. Is globalization

enhancing human capacity to deal with a particular issue? Or is it making it more difficult? Of course, each individual's perspective will be influenced by whether he or she evaluates these issues based on self-interest, national interest, a religious view, or from a global humanitarian viewpoint. For example, when considering the issue of free trade (Chapter 6), readers must decide how they evaluate a moral question such as, "Is free trade good or bad?" Those concerned first and foremost with self-interest will ask, How does free trade affect me? A national point of view will consider one's country and the effects of free trade on it. If readers identify with a religion, they will ask how their religion would instruct them on this question. Finally, the global humanitarian view would ask what is best for humanity in general. Therefore, readers must ask themselves what is most important when evaluating the issues discussed in this book.

■ INTERCONNECTEDNESS AMONG ISSUES

As mentioned above, a primary purpose of this book is to explore how the issues introduced in the various chapters are interconnected. In other words, the poverty chapter should not be considered separate from the chapter on population, even though these two issues are treated separately. Below are several examples of how issues discussed in this book are interconnected.

- The growth in the world's population (Chapter 9) has been dramatically affected, especially in Africa, by the AIDS crisis, which is discussed in the chapter on health (Chapter 12).
- Many of the value judgments that the trade chapter (Chapter 6) urges readers to consider are intricately linked to human rights issues (Chapter 4).
- Ethnic conflict discussed in Chapter 3 (as well as other types of conflict) often leads to internal migration as well as international population movements (Chapter 9).
- One of the recommendations for reducing poverty (Chapter 8) is to educate women and give them more decisionmaking power over their lives (Chapter 11).

The interconnectedness of these issues is even more extensive than these examples demonstrate. For instance, while an increase in AIDS will affect population growth, the connections do not end there. AIDS epidemics also lead to increased government expenditures, which can lead to increased indebtedness, which will likely lead to more poverty, and so on. Thus, each global issue discussed in this book has multiple consequences.

■ OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This book has been organized into five parts. Part 1, which focuses on conflict and security issues, considers some of the primary sources of conflict and some of the many approaches to establishing and maintaining peace. Part 2 concentrates on economic issues ranging from international trade and capital flows to one of the major concerns that confronts humanity—poverty. Part 3 deals with issues that, although not confined to, tend to plague the poorer countries, such as population growth, health issues, and issues that affect women and children. And Part 4 focuses on environmental issues (such as global warming, ozone depletion, biodiversity, and others) and global attempts to solve them. Part 5 discusses possible future world orders, sources of hope and challenges that face us in the coming decades, and innovative actions that are being taken to make a positive impact on global issues.

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What examples of globalization can you identify in your life?
2. Do you think globalization will continue to increase? If so, in what areas?
3. Do you think globalization has more positive attributes or more negative attributes?
4. Can you think of additional examples of how the global issues discussed in different chapters are interconnected?

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Part I

CONFLICT AND SECURITY

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