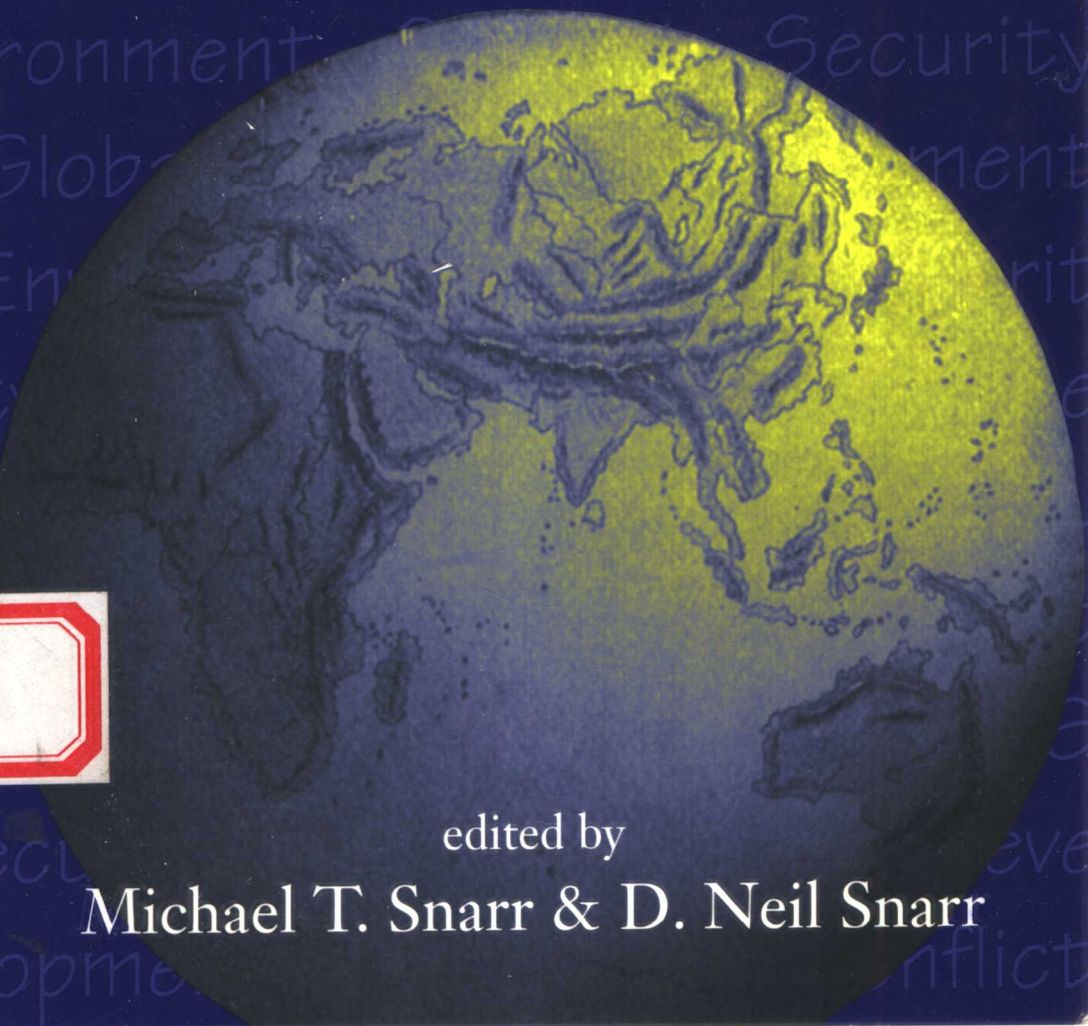


INTRODUCING GLOBAL ISSUES



edited by

Michael T. Snarr & D. Neil Snarr

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BOULDER
LONDON

Published in the United States of America in 1998 by
Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
1800 30th Street, Boulder, Colorado 80301

and in the United Kingdom by
Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Introducing global issues / edited by Michael T. Snarr and

D. Neil Snarr.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-55587-587-4 (hardcover : alk. paper). — ISBN 1-55587-595-5
(pbk. : alk. paper)

1. World politics—1989– 2. International economic relations.
3. Social history—1970– 4. Ecology. I. Snarr, Michael T.
II. Snarr, Neil, 1933–

D860.I62 1998

909.82—dc21

98-15207

CIP

British Cataloguing in Publication Data

A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book
is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound in the United States of America



The paper used in this publication meets the requirements
of the American National Standard for Permanence of



Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1984. Printed on
recycled paper.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation to those who made this book possible. Jeffrey Lantis, John McLaughlin, Stephen Poe, Gerald Sazama, Amanda Dobbs, Michael Ebbert, Kimberly Hawk, Alison Johnson, Sekou Ade Mark, Christina Ralbovsky, and Kim Pavlina assisted us by reading and commenting on parts of the manuscript. Special thanks go to Margaret Degenhardt and Rena Hutton, who proofread several chapters. We are indebted to Connie Crecion for providing outstanding secretarial help and to Divya Thadani for technical assistance.

We would like to thank Lynne Rienner for her support of this project and Sally Glover who promptly answered the multitude of questions we asked. Of course, we also owe a great deal of thanks to the contributors to this book, who were patient with what must have seemed like a never-ending stream of requests.

We are also grateful to our institutions for support. Special thanks go to Wheeling Jesuit University, which provided release time through its Scholar-in-Residence program, and to the Social Science Department at Wheeling Jesuit, which offered unwavering support.

Most important, we would like to thank our families for bearing with us throughout this demanding process. Both our wives read significant portions of the manuscripts and gave valuable comments. The book would not have been possible without them.

*Michael T. Snarr
D. Neil Snarr*

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1

Introduction

Michael T. Snarr

- Approximately 230,000 people are added to the world's population every day; that is the equivalent of 84 million people per year (Crossette 1996b).
- People in more than 130 countries have access to Cable News Network (CNN) (Barber 1996).
- In one region of Australia, a majority of the people over sixty-five years of age have skin cancer (Gore 1992).
- The number of individuals suffering from lack of food has declined over the past two decades (FAO 1996).
- Each year nearly 80,000 square miles of forest are depleted (with only a fraction of it being reforested). This is equal to the total territory of Maine, Massachusetts, and Virginia (Rourke 1997).
- Over the past two decades, the lives of 3 million children per year have been saved by immunization programs (UNDP 1996).
- More civilians have died this century as a result of war than in the four previous centuries combined.
- McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken served more customers than any other restaurants in Japan in 1992 (Barber 1996).
- Tens of thousands of species are becoming extinct every year, and the rate is increasing.
- More than 1 billion people live in absolute poverty (UNDP 1996).
- Global military expenditures have decreased over the past decade (UNDP 1994).
- At the end of the century, 90 percent of the market for Coca-Cola will be outside the United States (Hauchler and Kennedy 1994).

- Nearly 20 million people are HIV-infected (UNDP 1996).
- Smallpox has been wiped out.

Each of the items above is related to a global issue discussed in this book. 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 cross political boundaries (country borders) and therefore 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.

Our primary goal is to introduce several of the most pressing global issues and demonstrate how strongly they are interconnected. We also hope to motivate the reader to learn more about global issues and in turn to be a positive force for change.

■ 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, Chicago Bulls, New York Yankees, and Dallas Cowboys hats and T-shirts are easily found outside of the United States. In many “foreign” countries, Madonna, Michael Jackson, Metallica, and other U.S. music groups dominate the airways; CNN and *Baywatch* are on television screens; and Arnold Schwarzenegger 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 homogenous 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 . . . now reaches more than 140 countries” (Iyer 1993: 86); “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 concept of globalization and a shrinking world is not without its critics. 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 economies*, *the advanced industrial economies*, and *the first world*.) "Global" is not "universal" (Mowlana 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. In most African countries there are fewer than four televisions for every 100 people (UNDP 1996). There are fewer phone lines in sub-Saharan Africa than there are in Manhattan (Redfern 1995), and "of the 600 million telephones in the world, 450 million of them are located in nine countries" (Toffler and Toffler 1991: 58).

Even those in the South that 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 (many of which are discussed in Chapter 3), are cited as evidence of forces countering globalization. Many subnational groups (groups within 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, 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 globalization, as we have defined it, is not occurring to some extent; they do, however, provide an important caution against overstating or making broad generalizations about the 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). But other aspects are more complex.

The first column of Table 1.1 identifies three areas that are affected by globalization: politics, economics, and culture. 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 and electronic mail are two 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, nuclear materials, unwanted immigrants, and terrorists.

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

Table 1.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Globalization

Realm of Globalization	Advantages	Disadvantages
Political	Weakens power of authoritarian governments	Unwanted external influences are difficult to control
Economic	Jobs, capital, more choices	Exploitative; only benefits a few
Cultural	Offers exposure to other cultures	Cultural imperialism

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 good-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 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 our capability to deal with a particular issue? Or is it making it more difficult? 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 our capability 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, religious views, or from a global humanitarian viewpoint.

■ 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. Table 1.2 is designed to illustrate this notion of linked issues. Each cell in the table represents the interaction of an issue in the first column with an issue in the top row. For example, Cell 2 (C2) should be read as follows: conflict (see the left column) can lead to negative consequences in the international economy (see the top row) as a result of war disrupting the free flow of goods between two countries or within an entire region.

Of course, when two global issues interact, the result is not necessarily negative. Cell 8 (C8) shows that an increase in a country's gross national product (GNP, or total of goods and services produced by a country's citizens in a given year) can mean a decline in its poverty rate. But also note that a possible linkage will not always occur: as Chapter 8 points out, an increase in GNP does not always lead to a decline in poverty.

Table 1.2 does not cover all possible linkages but points out a few basic ones. Also, the table understates the multiple nature of the linkages. For instance, the fall in poverty rates suggested in C8 would affect the environment, which in turn would affect international economic issues like trade, which in turn would affect poverty, and so on. Thus, each variable in Table 1.2 not only has multiple consequences, but also creates a ripple effect.

Table 1.2 Connections Between Global Issues

	Conflict	International Economics	Poverty	Population/Migration	Environment
Conflict	C1 X	C2 war → disruption of trade patterns	C3 war → destruction of food crops	C4 conflict → emigration	C5 nuclear war → environmental damage
International Economics	C6 trade disputes → trade wars	C7 X	C8 increase in GNP → decrease in poverty	C9 decrease in jobs → emigration	C10 increase in GNP → increased pollution
Poverty	C11 increase in poverty → conflict	C12 poverty increases → more foreign investment sought	C13 X	C14 decrease in poverty → less emigration	C15 poverty → environmental destruction
Population/Migration	C16 illegal immigrants → domestic conflict	C17 migrant labor → increase in low-wage jobs	C18 population increase → increase in number of poor	C19 X	C20 increase in population → strain on natural resources
Environment	C21 scarce resources → conflict	C22 abundant natural resources → wealth via exports	C23 unsustainable use of environment → poverty	C24 unsustainable development → emigration	C25 X

■ OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This book has been organized into four parts. The first, 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 investment to one of the major concerns that confronts the global economy—poverty. Part 3 deals with issues that, although not confined to, tend to plague the poorer countries. And Part 4 focuses on environmental issues and cooperative attempts to solve them. A concluding chapter discusses possible future world orders, sources of hope and challenges that face us in the coming century, and things individuals can do to have a positive impact on global problems.

■ 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 that could be included in Table 1.2?

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The Global Challenge of Weapons Proliferation

Jeffrey S. Lantis

The proliferation of weapons is one of the most serious challenges to international security today. Arms races, regional competition, and the spread of weapons technology to other countries are all important dimensions of the proliferation challenge that could contribute to long-term global instability.

Proliferation is best understood as the rapid increase in the number and destructive capability of armaments. Evidence of the impact of proliferation on world affairs can be seen in the arms race between Germany and Great Britain that helped to spark World War I; the nuclear arms race between the superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, that brought us to the brink of a World War III; and the clandestine arms buildup in Iraq that helped it fight the Gulf War.

It is important to remember, however, that proliferation is not simply a problem for politicians and military leaders. When governments choose to use weapons in conflict in the twentieth century, they are exposing both soldiers and civilians to danger. In fact, the proliferation of weapons has contributed to higher civilian casualties and greater destruction this century than in the previous four centuries combined (Small and Singer 1982). When governments devote funds to build up large armies and weapons of mass destruction, they are also choosing to divert funds from other programs like education and health care. Clearly, citizens of the world experience these direct and indirect effects of proliferation every day.

■ TYPES OF PROLIFERATION

This chapter examines four different types of weapons proliferation. As illustrated in Table 2.1, there are two broad categories to consider: vertical