THIRD EDITION
INTRODUCING
global issues
edited by
MICHAEL T. SNARR
& D. NEIL SNARR

Introducing Global Issues

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For Elise,
whose loving spirit and sense of wonder
have brought us great joy

Preface

In this new edition of *Introducing Global Issues,* every chapter has been thoroughly updated to cover the most recent developments. We have dramatically changed the chapter on peace and conflict to reflect the increasing significance of terrorism to global security. New case studies have been added to the chapters on human rights, women, and natural resources. Additionally, the environmental section now more thoroughly examines the history of global environmental conferences and the concept of the global commons. Other ideas for improvement and general comments are welcome at michael_snarr@wilmington.edu.

* * *

We would like to express our appreciation to those who made this book possible. First and foremost, we express deep regret that Marian Miller passed away on November 2, 2003. We are greatly appreciative of her contribution to the field of international environmental politics. Marian will be sincerely missed.

Part of the joy of a project like this is working with scholars and practitioners who share a concern for the future of humanity. Many thanks for the efforts of all of our contributors!

We thank our global issues students at Wilmington College, especially the fall 2004 honors class (April Bentley, David Bowers, Wendy Cooper, Rosalyn Craig, Kaitlyn Donohoe, Cynthia Drerup, Seth Fair, Emily Holden, Samantha Hutcheson, Sarah Jordan, Jennifer Kerschner, Kristin Kramer, Tabitha Moss, Jennifer Pequignot, Wade Rethmel, Lisa Robinson, Danielle Sollars, Christopher E. Sprowl, and Dana Workman). Each student read and commented on multiple draft chapters for this edition. Other students who contributed research and suggestions include Brittany Hensley, Mark Lundsford, Heather Parker, Robert Trumpy, and Angeline Burrall.

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Once again, loving gratitude goes to our eternally supportive family—Melissa, Ruth, Madison, Ty, Isaiah, and Elise.

—Michael T. Snarr
—D. Neil Snarr

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1

Introducing Globalization and Global Issues

Michael T. Snarr

- More than 200,000 people are added to the world's population every day.
- 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).
- During the 1990s the share of people suffering from extreme poverty fell from 30 percent to 23 percent (UNDP 2003).
- An infant living in Africa is thirteen times more likely to die than one living in Europe or North America (PRB 2004).
- 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 1.1 billion people live on less than one U.S. dollar per day.
- During the past thirty years, life expectancy in the developing world has increased by eight years and illiteracy has been reduced by nearly 50 percent (UNDP 2003).
- At least 38 million people are HIV-infected, including more than 38 percent of Swaziland's population (UNAIDS 2004).
- Approximately 27,000 children die every day from preventable diseases.
- In the 1990s, more children died from diarrhea than all the people who died due to armed conflict since World War II (UNDP 2003).
- In the poor countries, more than 80 percent of children are enrolled in primary school (UNDP 2003)

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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 here 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 cross country borders and/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 them.

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 and other U.S. music groups dominate the airwaves; CNN and MTV are on television screens; and *Shrek* 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).

For the editors of this book, globalization took on a more personal face last year when we took a group of students to Mexico. As we were on a bus bound for the pyramids of Teotihuácan, just outside of Mexico City, we met a Canadian named Jag. We learned on the bus ride that Jag is a Hindu from India who lives in Montreal. His job is to assist the newly formed Inuit (formerly known as Eskimos) government of Nunavet, which is a new Canadian territory created through negotiations with the Canadian govern-

ment. Think about it. A Hindu Indian living in French-speaking Montreal, assisting the Inuit government, and visiting a pyramid built by the Teotihuácan peoples while vacationing in Mexico City—now that's globalization!

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, who 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 they do now. Take for example the following quote, which focuses on the dramatic changes that have taken place in the past thirty years to make the world more economically interdependent: "The complexity of modern finance makes New York dependent on London, London upon Paris, Paris upon Berlin, to a greater degree than has ever yet been the case in history. This interdependence is the result of the daily use of those contrivances of civilization . . . the instantaneous dissemination of financial and commercial information . . . and generally the incredible increase in the rapidity of communication" (Angell 1909: 44–45). If this statement were to appear in a newspaper today, no one would give it a second thought. But it was written in 1909—illustrating the belief of some critics that globalization is not a new phenomenon.

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, as of 2002, only one in ten people worldwide have access to it (UNDP 2004). 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, in many of the developed countries, nearly half of all people use this technology (UNDP 2004). A good example of this contrast can be seen in the recent 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 the increased flow of information, a characteristic of globalization, goes 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 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

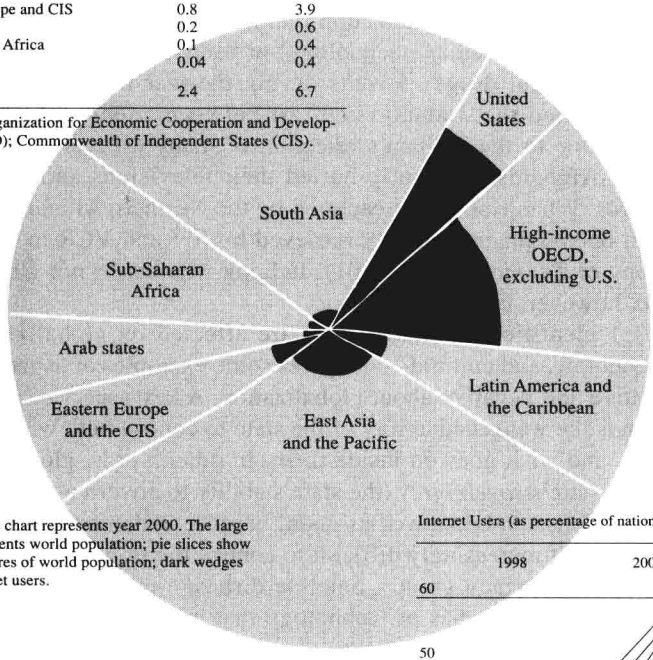
> has produced not uniformity, but a yearning for a return to non-secular values. Today, there is a rebirth of revitalized fundamentalism in all the world's major religions, whether Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Shintoism, or Confucianism. At the same time the global homogeneity has reached the airwaves, these religious tenets have reemerged as defining identities. (Mowlana 1995: 46)

None of these criticisms mean that our contemporary time period is not different in some important aspects. There is widespread agreement that

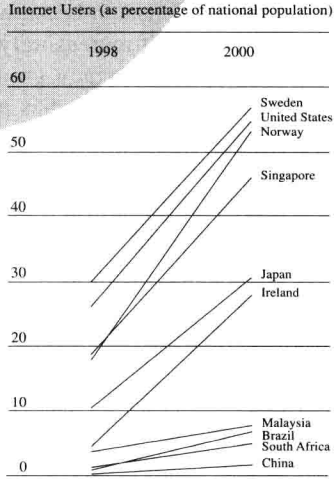
Figure 1.1 Internet Users Around the World, 1998 and 2000

	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.

communications, trade, and capital are moving at unprecedented speeds and at volumes never before seen. However, these criticisms do 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 backyards. 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, however, is complex.

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.

In the realm of *economics,* increased globalization has given con-

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

sumers 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. These critics point out that the combined wealth of the fifteen richest people in the world is more than the gross domestic product (GDP) of sub-Saharan Africa (Parker 2002). 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 see things differently. Samuel Huntington has argued that the shrinking world will bring a "clash of civilization." In this scenario, clashes will occur among many civilizations including the largely Christian West against Islam. Other 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. 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. 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" (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). Thus the global product is often altered to take on a local flavor. The term "glocalization" has combined the words "global" and "local" to describe such hybrid products.

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 a global humanitarian viewpoint. For example, when considering the issue of free trade (Chapter 6), readers must

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