Introducing Global Issues

SEVENTH EDITION

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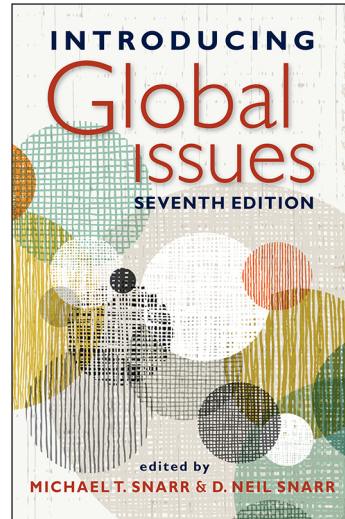
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Exploring Global Issues

Michael T. Snarr

A global pandemic, resurgent nationalism and populist leaders, extreme weather, and widespread economic troubles. Watching the news can leave you feeling hopeless. Unfortunately, as the statistics immediately below reveal, a number of global issues are threatening humanity, and their impact is likely to be exacerbated by Covid-19 and the economic and social effects resulting from the pandemic.

- Over 200,000 people are added to the world's total population every day.
- 15,000 children under the age of five die each day; over half of these deaths could be prevented with basic health care (WHO 2019a).
- The world has more refugees now than any time since 1945 (UNHCR 2020b).
- Approximately one in nine people (more than 820 million) are undernourished globally (WHO 2019g).
- The annual increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide over the past sixty years is about a hundred times faster than previously (Lindsey 2020).
- 2 billion people lack access to toilets or other forms of proper sanitation (WHO 2019f).
- Of the warmest ten years, nine have occurred since 2005 (NOAA 2020c).
- Scientists estimate that approximately 1 million plant and animal species could become extinct over the next several decades (UN 2019b).

- Nearly 40 percent of adults are overweight, and 13 percent are obese (WHO 2020i).
- Each second, an area larger than a football field is deforested (Carrington et al. 2018).

Though the news headlines today are often negative, and the problems of the world often seem overwhelming, progress is being made on many global issues. Important strides have been made in the areas of education, war, health, and more. And through the hard work of countries, international governmental organizations or intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals, more improvements can be made. The list below offers some reasons for hope.

- War between countries has become very rare.
- Global literacy rates have risen dramatically over past decades (UNESCO 2017).
- On average, global life expectancies today are more than twice as high as they were a century ago.
- Over the past decade and a half, AIDS-related deaths and new HIV infections have been declining (UNAIDS 2020).
- Over the past three decades, the world's population has increased by nearly 2 billion; yet the number of hungry people has declined by 216 million (WFP 2020).
- Over the past fifteen years, those using a basic drinking water service increased from 81 percent to 89 percent (UNESCO 2019).
- In less than two decades, the number of deaths per year of children under five years old has decreased from 12.6 million to 5.3 million (WHO 2019a).
- According to the most recent estimates, the percentage of people who live on less than $1.90 per day has decreased from 36 percent to 10 percent since 1990 (World Bank 2020b).

Each of these items 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 Covid-19, which originated in China and became a global pandemic. 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.

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 and ask what they can do to address them.

Is the World Shrinking?

The term *globalization,* which can be defined as "the intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across borders" (Holm and Sørensen 1995: 1), is one of the buzzwords that have become commonplace. 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, hats and t-shirts adorned with the logos of Nike, Adidas, and Manchester United, for example, are easily found throughout the world. In many countries, Taylor Swift, BTS, Ed Sheeran, Drake, and other music groups often dominate the radio waves, the BBC and CNN dominate television screens, and *The Avengers,* and other Hollywood films dominate the theaters. 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 . . . pressing nations into one commercially homogeneous global network: one McWorld tied together by technology, ecology, communication, and commerce" (1992: 53).

Despite recent anti-globalization responses by some governments, some scholars firmly argue that we are at the point of no return. The assertion is that "the economies of countries such as China and the United States are too deeply entwined to be separated—or 'decoupled'—without causing chaos. States have little or no ability to become economically self-reliant" (Farrell and Newman 2020). These authors use the term "chained globalization" to describe an interconnected world, which is essentially inevitable, though far from harmonious (Farrell and Newman 2020).

For the editors of this book, globalization took on a more personal face several years ago when we took a group of students to Mexico. As we sat on a bus bound for the pyramids of Teotihuacán, just outside Mexico City, we met a Canadian named Jag. We learned on the bus ride that Jag was a Hindu from India who lived in Montreal. His job was to assist the Inuit (Eskimo) government of Nunavet, a relatively new Canadian territory created through negotiations with the Canadian government. Think about it: a Hindu Indian living in French-speaking Montreal, assisting the Inuit government, and visiting a pyramid built by the Teotihuacán peoples, while vacationing in Mexico City—now that's globalization!

Technology is perhaps the most visible aspect of globalization and in many ways is 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 [along with nano- and cyber-technology 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 has enhanced the spread of Western culture, primarily that of the United States.

Thomas Friedman, in his boldly titled bestseller *The World Is Flat,* argues that the world is undergoing its third phase of globalization: "Globalization 3.0 is shrinking the world from a size small to a size tiny and flattening the playing field at the same time" (2005: 10). Whereas globalization in the past was characterized by companies becoming more global, this third phase is unique due to "the newfound power for *individuals* to collaborate and compete globally" (2005: 10, original emphasis). For instance, radiologists in India and Australia interpret CAT-scan images from the United States, telephone operators in India answer calls for major US corporations, and Japanese-speakers at call centers in China serve Japanese customers. Thus the playing field is being leveled and individuals and small companies from all over the world, including poor countries, can now compete in the global economy.

There is arguably a similar phenomenon occurring with global conflict. Steven Pinker and Andrew Mack (2014) have argued that while the media may lead us to believe the world is increasingly violent, we are actually living in a relatively peaceful time. Joshua Goldstein agrees and highlights the positive nature of globalization. He argues that governments, "by participating in an international community, . . . jointly achieve some mutually beneficial outcomes that could not be realized separately. The reduction of war worldwide is one of those outcomes" (2011: 8). In part, Goldstein recognizes the importance of shared global values that widely reject war and human rights abuses. Both the strengthening of the international community and shared values are evidence of a shrinking, increasingly homogeneous world. It should be noted that calculating the severity and frequency of wars is difficult, and that not all scholars agree with Pinker and Mack, and Goldstein (Fazal and Poast 2019).

Of course, Earth is not literally shrinking (nor flat), but in light of the rate at which travel and communication speeds have increased, the world has in a sense become smaller. 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). Or as Friedman puts it: "There is something about the flattening of the world that is going to be qualitatively different from other such profound changes: the speed and breadth with which it is taking hold. . . . This flattening process is happening at warp speed and directly or indirectly touching a lot more people on the planet at once" (2005: 46).

This seemingly uncritical acceptance of the concept of globalization and a shrinking world as new and revolutionary 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 as they do now. Take, for example, the following quote, which focuses on the dramatic changes that have taken place in the past three decades 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 at the start of the twentieth century—illustrating the belief of some critics that globalization is not a new phenomenon.

Other skeptics caution that while interdependence and technological advancement have increased in some parts of the world, this is not true for the vast majority of third world countries (the terms "third world," "the South," "developing world," and "less developed countries" are used interchangeably throughout this book in reference to the poorer countries, in contrast to "first world," "the North," "developed world," and "more developed countries" in reference to countries like the United States, Canada, those of Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand). For example, Hamid Mowlana argues that "global" is not "universal" (1995: 42). Although a small number of people in third world countries may have access to much of the new technology and truly live in the "global village," the large majority of populations in the South do not. It should also be noted that once the Covid-19 pandemic hit, and most universities and colleges in the United States moved classes online, it became clear that many students did not have access to adequate broadband internet in rural areas.

Research on global internet usage illustrates this point. Table 1.1 shows findings from a survey of geographic regions of the world. Utilizing internet usage as an indicator of globalization, the table clearly shows large disparities among regions. Notice that in the North—Europe (87.2 percent),

North America (90.3 percent)—the vast majority of the population uses the internet. However, Asia (59.1 percent), and especially Africa (47.1 percent), stand in stark contrast. North Americans are nearly twice as likely to use the internet as are Africans. These trends over the past decade do indicate that Asia, the Middle East, and especially Africa are rapidly increasing their internet usage (over 11,000 percent in twenty years); however, the gap between North and South will take many years to close. In other words, globalization is far from universal when measured by internet usage.

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 technology are at a disadvantage. The globalization of digital flows in the less developed countries has typically been a one-way proposition: the people in the global South tend not to control the information; they primarily receive it.

There are other important obstacles that suggest globalization may not be uniformly distributed across the globe. Barber (1992) suggests that the world is paradoxically experiencing both global integration, or "McDonaldization," and global disintegration. This disintegration has economic and political, as well as cultural, roots. Behind much of this anti-globalization are populist leaders and movements (the term *populist* is generally defined to include anti-elite and, in this case, anti-globalization sentiments and will be touched on in several of the book's chapters). On the economic and political front, Brexit is a prominent and recent example. The British people, for various reasons—including a distrust of global institutions and the global economy—voted to withdraw from the

Table 1.1 World Internet Usage and Population Statistics, 2020

World Region	Population	Number of Internet Users	Percentage Increase, 2000–2020	Percentage of Population Who Use the Internet	Regional Users as a Percentage of Worldwide Users
Africa	1,340,598,447	631,940,772	13,898	47.1	12.8
Asia	4,294,516,659	2,555,636,255	2,136	59.1	51.8
Europe	834,995,197	727,848,547	593	87.2	14.8
Middle East	260,991,690	184,856,813	5,527	70.8	3.7
North America	368,869,647	332,908,868	208	90.3	6.8
Latin America and Caribbean	658,345,826	467,817,332	2,489	71.5	9.5
Oceania and Australia	42,690,838	28,917,600	279	67.7	0.6
World total	7,796,949,710	4,929,926,187	1,266	63.2	100.0

Source: IWS 2020.

European Union. Many people across the globe share this skepticism toward the political and economic aspects of globalization. President Trump also exhibited strong anti-globalization tendencies through his withdrawal of the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Paris climate accords, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Populist leaders are, or have been, in power in dozens of countries, including Brazil, the Philippines, India, and Indonesia. Anti-globalization can also have an ethnic or cultural focus. Animosity toward foreigners, in general, and immigrants, especially refugees, in particular, is a prevalent attitude in many countries. Furthermore, in many countries there are sub-national groups (groups within nations) who not only reject globalization, but also desire to govern themselves. An extreme case is ISIS, which sought to form its own sovereign region due at least in part to its rejection of the secular nature of globalization (e.g., women's rights). In Kosovo we saw a more ethnic-based movement. The region of Kosovo, which is composed of 90 percent ethnic Albanians, sought to separate from Serbia, which is comprised of a majority Serb population. Chapter 4 will further delve into many of these disintegration issues.

None of these criticisms mean that our contemporary world is not now different in some important respects than experienced by previous generations. There is widespread agreement that information, trade, and capital are moving at unprecedented speed and volume. However, these criticisms do provide an important warning against overstating or making broad generalizations about the processes and effects of globalization.

Having established these cautions, it is important to understand that globalization is always a dynamic phenomenon, and our contemporary global context is no exception. Over the past decade or so, globalization has begun to change in some notable ways. First, the nature of globalization is shifting. Since the global recession of 2007–2009, analysts have noted that some indicators of globalization (e.g., trade and financial flows) have slowed in terms of their rate of growth, if not in absolute terms. Second, many governments have taken a more skeptical view toward global trade. Yet other indicators, such as digital flows that move data in the form of email, video streaming, and so on, are becoming the central features of this evolving globalization (Lund and Tyson 2018).

We are arguably entering a new phase of globalization—what some call globalization 4.0. This new phase depends less on physical goods and human labor, and much more on "artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles and the Internet of Things" (Schwab 2019). The *Internet of Things* is a term used to describe "all the internet-connected devices that have the capability to connect to other internet-powered devices. These connected devices share data and information with each other through the internet"

(Conklin 2020). Examples of the Internet of Things include medical implants in humans or animals, smart-home devices, automobile sensors, and the like. Schwab (2019) describes the novel nature and impact of this next phase of globalization:

> By moving into new industries—such as cloud computing, healthcare, loans and payments—Amazon, China's Alibaba, and other tech companies are becoming digital conglomerates. Other platforms, such as Airbnb, WeWork, and Uber, expand globally without ever owning the physical assets their services rely on. Along the way, these firms have outgrown the boundaries of traditional businesses and disrupted social patterns. Artificial intelligence, big data, and the ability to build mass-use tech platforms are starting to determine even national power.

Furthermore, global leadership may be changing. While the United States, since President Trump, has become diminished in its global leadership role, China has made some moves to fill this vacuum, including seeking closer economic ties with Africa, creating the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, asserting territorial claims in the South China Sea, and so on. The changing nature of globalization will of course bring winners and losers. As a result, some relatively obscure actors will move into positions of greater prominence. "Consider Estonia, which has a population of just 1.3 million but has emerged as a giant in the digital era. . . . Once an economy based heavily on logging, Estonia is now home to the founders of Skype and other technology start-ups" (Lund and Tyson 2018). Conversely, the poorest of the poor will likely not share in the benefits of globalization. As we will see in the next section, globalization can be good or bad; it largely depends on what type of globalization we are discussing and who you are.

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 or a more quickly spreading contagion like the novel coronavirus). The same technology that connects people throughout the world for good causes, such as the transmission of valuable healthcare products and information, also enables groups like white supremacists and ISIS to recruit via social media. Given globalization's complexity, it is useful to analyze the concept by considering different types of globalization.

Table 1.2 identifies three areas that are affected by globalization—political, economic, and cultural—and gives examples of positive and negative aspects of globalization. A key aspect of political globalization is the weakened ability of the state to control both what crosses its borders and

Table 1.2 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

what happens inside them. In other words, globalization can reduce the state's sovereignty—that is, its 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 pro-democracy groups. Satellite television and the internet in particular have eroded state sovereignty. But decreased 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 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. These critics point out that the global economic system "values the wealth of the privileged few, mostly men, more than the billions of hours of the most essential work—the unpaid and underpaid care work done primarily by women and girls around the world" (Oxfam 2020). As a result, the more than 2,100 billionaires in the world have more wealth than the poorest 4.6 billion people (Oxfam 2020).

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 (1998) has argued that the shrinking world will bring a "clash of civilizations." In this scenario, clashes will occur among many civilizations, including the largely Christian West against Islam. Other critics are concerned with cultural imperialism, in which dominant groups (primarily wealthy countries) force their culture on others. A primary tool of cultural influence is the North's multibillion-dollar advertising budgets used to influence and to some extent destroy non-Western cultures. 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 and minority languages will become extinct as foreign languages, especially English, penetrate borders. For instance, in recent years the French government has made attempts to restrict the use of English in France. Similarly, the United Nations (UN) has recently recognized the importance of preserving indigenous languages and has organized an expert group to plan for their preservation and continuation. It is also appropriate to point out there are occasional attempts within the United States to establish "English-only" laws.

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, such as Hamid Mowlana, 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" (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.

In sum, globalization offers a multitude of advantages to people throughout the world, from greater wealth to more choices in consumer products. At the same time, globalization exposes people to greater vulnerability and insecurity. Our jobs become less secure, diseases travel faster, and traditional family structures are weakened (Kirby 2006). 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 problem? 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. Readers must decide, based on what is most important to them, how to evaluate moral questions of good versus bad. For example, when considering the issue of free trade (Chapter 10), those concerned first and foremost with self-interest will ask, "How does free trade affect me?" For nationalist readers, the question will be, "How does free trade affect my country?" For religious readers, the question will be, "How does my religion instruct me on this issue?" Finally, global humanitarians will ask, "What is best for humanity in general?" By answering these questions, readers will develop a perspective through which they will be able to reflect upon and analyze their positions on the issues presented in this book.

Interconnectedness Among Issues

As mentioned earlier, a primary purpose of this book is to explore the inter-connectedness of the various issues discussed here. For example, the chapter on poverty should not be considered separate from the chapter on population, even though these two issues are treated separately. Here are several examples of how issues discussed in this book are interconnected:

- Growth in the world's population (Chapter 12) has been significantly affected, especially in Africa, by the AIDS crisis (Chapter 6).
- Many of the value judgments concerning trade issues (Chapter 10) are intricately linked to human rights issues (Chapter 5).
- Ethnic conflict (Chapter 4) (as well as other types of conflict) often leads to internal migration as well as international population movements (Chapter 12).
- One of the recommendations for reducing poverty (Chapter 11) is to educate women and give them more decisionmaking power over their lives (Chapter 13).
- Climate change (Chapter 15) is expected to have increasingly negative effects on health (Chapter 6), migration (Chapter 12), and conflict (Chapter 2).

The interconnectedness of issues in this book is even more extensive than these examples demonstrate. The events surrounding Covid-19 provide an appropriate illustration. When the Covid-19 issue began to hit the news at the beginning of 2020, it was a problem just in China. By March, the World Health Organization had declared it a global pandemic. The nature of globalization—in particular the rapid transportation of people—led to a subsequent spread of the virus. So due to globalization, what was a virus in one East Asian country, soon spread throughout the world. The interconnectedness of global issues means that this is more than just a health issue. Though the consequences of the virus will take years, maybe decades, to assess, scholars and practitioners are seeing and predicting widespread effects. For instance, the global economy has been severely disrupted by the effects of Covid-19. As a result, global capital flows have slowed, as has economic growth. The World Bank (2020b) expects the global economy to contract 5.2 percent. In turn, experts are predicting that an additional 50 million people—beyond the number originally predicted for 2020—will fall into extreme poverty (defined as making less than $1.90 per day). This is notable because poverty has declined every year since 2000 (Kharas and Hamel 2020). Food supplies and access are also being threatened by multiple factors including loss of income, disruption of supplies, the prevalence of Covid-19 in farm communities, restrictions on travel for migrant workers, and quarantines.

These factors may lead to millions more hungry people (FAO 2020a). What may be less obvious is the degree to which all of these issues affect women. When economic times are more challenging, many of the impacts—increased childcare, eldercare, and educational responsibilities—tend to fall on women. A majority of frontline workers battling the pandemic are also women (Ravanera 2020).

On the human rights front, the nongovernmental organization Human Rights Watch (HRW 2020a), highlights the impact that the virus has had on civil rights in a few countries. In China, citizens who have raised awareness about Covid-19 via social media have been detained. In Thailand, critics of the government's handling of the pandemic have been sued, threatened, and fired. In the environmental realm, Covid-19 and climate change are inter-related. On the one hand, scientists have repeatedly warned us over the years that rising temperatures will exacerbate the threat of health issues such as disease and viruses. While reduced transportation and lower economic growth have led to reduced greenhouse emissions, this is fully expected to be a short-term effect.

While the Covid-19 pandemic is primarily discussed in the health chapter (Chapter 6), it is explicitly connected to issues in all of the chapters in this book. To name just some of the more obvious connections, the pandemic has affected or is affected by the following issues and areas: globalization (Chapter 1), poverty and hunger (Chapter 11), capital flows (Chapters 9, 10, and 11), agriculture and food supplies (Chapter 7), women (Chapter 13), human security (Chapter 2), human rights (Chapter 5), sustainable development (Chapter 14), climate change (Chapter 15), and the everyday lives of people such as those involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict (Chapter 4).

Key Players

Of the key players or actors involved in these global issues, the most salient are states. In the following pages, you will continually read about the countries of the world and their efforts to solve these various global issues. The modern international state system dates back to the evolution of the Westphalian political order, following the Thirty Years' War in Europe (1618–1648). This war pitted religious and political units against one another in a devastating conflict that swept across the continent. One of the central issues that sparked the war was whether kings and princes had the right to establish their own religious and political orders in their lands, or whether they should remain beholden to the Catholic Church. The groups fighting for more state autonomy won the conflict, and European leaders signed the Treaty of Westphalia to establish a new political order to ensure greater peace and stability in Europe.

States are political units that generally have the authority to make decisions over a geographic area. As a result, states are considered sovereign. The primacy of states means that key economic, political, and especially military decisions are made at the state level. While globalization is arguably eroding the centrality of states, the state is still the central actor when it comes to global issues. States are not to be confused with nations, which refer to groups of people who may or may not have a geographical area. The evolution of the state and nation, and the difference between these two, are elaborated in Chapter 4.

The primacy of states, however, does not mean that states are the only actors we need to consider when examining global issues. Since states tend to focus on their short-term self-interests, confronting issues that transcend state boundaries (e.g., air pollution and refugees) is difficult. As a result, states often form larger political and economic units to enhance cooperation on various issues. The logic is that by cooperating through an IGO, countries are better equipped to achieve a common goal, like preventing war or alleviating poverty, that they could not accomplish on their own. When states join IGOs, they give up varying amounts of sovereignty to achieve a common goal. For instance, if a state joins an environmental IGO, it may agree to reduce its own pollution in order to decrease global or regional pollution. If the issue is trade, the state will likely reduce or eliminate its tariffs in the hopes of achieving economic development. In both cases, by joining an IGO, states give up some sovereignty for a desired goal. IGOs are involved in each of the issues described in this book.

The most widely known IGO is the United Nations. The United Nations was created in 1945, in the wake of World War II. The devastation caused by the war—including the death of approximately 75 million people—was a catalyst for the creation of the United Nations. The United Nations boasts a membership that includes nearly every country in the world and has an extremely broad focus, including security (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2), economic development, human rights, and environmental issues. To deal with these issues, the UN has six principal organs (General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice, and Secretariat), and dozens of specialized agencies (e.g., Food and Agriculture Organization, Universal Postal Union, World Meteorological Organization). In addition, the UN has multiple related organizations, including the World Trade Organization.

The importance of the UN, its specialized agencies, and related organizations is demonstrated throughout this book. For instance, we will see in Chapter 10 how a majority of states came together after World War II to coordinate trade and financial systems across countries. In Chapter 2, we

will see how UN peacekeepers have contributed to reducing war over the past few decades. These are just a couple examples of the importance of the United Nations. It should also be said that despite the UN having wide membership and broad scope, its effectiveness is often stymied by political differences among states, a tight budget, and, most important, the fact that states have sovereignty and rarely relinquish this control.

In addition to the United Nations, many international governmental organizations are integral actors in the realm of global issues. Like the UN, these IGOs are created by states, and states are their primary members. Whether the issue is security, economics, human rights, health, or the environment, IGOs are involved in trying to solve the pressing global issues covered in this book. Two well-known IGOs are the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union (EU). Nearly all of the countries of the world belong to the IMF, which is headquartered in Washington, DC. Created after World War II, the IMF facilitates international economic cooperation among its members. The IMF is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 9, 10, and 11. One IGO receiving a lot of attention during the Covid-19 pandemic has been the World Health Organization. In addition, the World Food Programme, a branch of the United Nations, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 for its humanitarian work against hunger.

Whereas the IMF is open to all countries and focuses on economic issues, the European Union's membership is limited to the region of Europe and deals with a broad range of issues. The origins of the EU date back to the 1950s when European countries were seeking ways to avoid another world war. World Wars I and II, which had both been centered in Europe, led several European countries to design a cooperative arrangement in hopes of staving off future conflict. It started with economic cooperation in the form of European Coal and Steel Community and several other IGOs, including the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Commission. The hope was that developing closer relations among European countries would reduce the chance of war. The contemporary European Union went into effect in 1993 and seeks increased cooperation on economic, foreign, and security policy. One of its best-known cooperative outcomes has been the eurozone, a monetary union of nineteen EU states. The most visible outcome of the eurozone is that the euro is the official currency of all these. The eurozone is a good illustration of states giving up some of their sovereignty (their ability to control monetary policy) in order to achieve the goal of closer economic integration.

Each region of the world has multiple IGOs. Some of the more high-profile ones are the World Bank, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the African Union, the Asian Development Bank, and the United

States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA), formerly known as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Beyond states and their governments, there are many nonstate actors—often referred to as civil society actors. One group of nonstate actors is businesses, often referred to as multinational corporations (MNCs) or transnational corporations (TNCs). Google, Tesla, Starbucks, and McDonalds, and many other MNCs, are wealthier than many states (Belinchón and Moynihan 2018). The incredible power of MNCs, due to their wealth and mobility, has given them distinct advantages over states, especially small, weaker ones. In an article titled "Are Multinationals Now More Powerful Than the Nation State?" Green (2018) highlights how Google and Facebook have been able to use their power to limit the amount of taxes they pay in the United States, highlighting how even wealthy, more powerful states can be at a disadvantage from MNCs.

Other important and emerging actors are often overlooked. For instance, powerful US states, such as California—which has an economy larger than most countries and has successfully implemented more progressive environmental standards than the federal standards of the United States—are often ignored. Cities are also often mistakenly overlooked, as the following quote highlights.

> We are currently living through the biggest mass migration from countryside to cities in human history. The global population of cities is growing by 65 [million] people annually—that's the equivalent of 7 Chicagos a year, every year. Between now and 2025, we calculate that 440 cities in developing countries will generate nearly half of global GDP growth. Surat, Foshan and Porto Alegre are three of them. Surat, 180 miles north of Mumbai, accounts for about two-fifths of India's textile production. Foshan, on the Pearl River in Guangdong Province, is China's seventh largest city in terms of [gross domestic product]. Porto Alegre is capital of the fourth largest state in Brazil. All three have fast-growing populations, with a rapidly expanding base of consumers (Dobbs, Manyika, and Woetzel 2015).

Another type of nonstate actor is the nongovernmental organization (sometimes referred to as an international nongovernmental organization). In recent decades there has been a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs seeking to make the world a better place. NGOs, as their name implies, work outside the government and comprise individual citizens working together on one or more problems. NGOs emerge when a group of private citizens organize to fill a perceived gap. Often this occurs when it is believed that states are not fulfilling a role; for instance, Greenpeace seeks to solve certain environmental problems. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch exist because they see a need to fill a human rights gap. The Red Cross and World Vision address a need in humanitarian assistance. And

Doctors Without Borders offers medical assistance in war zones. These are just a few of tens of thousands of the NGOs that exist. Because these NGOs are often made up of highly motivated people, with increasing access to technology, they can be more effective than states. NGOs have become extremely active on all of the issues discussed in this book, and they often cooperate with IGOs and individual countries.

Closely related to NGOs are global social movements, which comprise global networks of individuals usually seeking change revolving around a global issue or institution. Recent examples of global social movements are Black Lives Matter, the People's Climate March, and the movement for LGBTQ+ rights. These movements involve people from around the world and often include widespread and large protests and marches, and usually target a perceived injustice such as racism, sexism, pollution, or low wages.

Celebrities can also play a role in resolving the global issues discussed in this book. A high-profile example was the 2020 "Global Goal: United for Our Future" initiative, which featured celebrities such as Shakira, Christine and the Queens, Charlize Theron, David Beckham, and host Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. The festival sought to raise money to battle Covid-19. The celebrities partnered with the European Commission, an IGO, and Global Citizen, an NGO. Earlier in 2020, celebrities including Elton John, Kylie Jenner, and Rebel Wilson, spurred by the massive wildfires in Australia, pledged money for climate change. The fundraising efforts spread to Facebook and even the Golden Globes when Joaquin Phoenix brought attention to climate change. As the wildfires affected the Australian Open, tennis stars Serena Williams, Roger Federer, and others supported the effort.

Along with celebrities, wealthy philanthropists like Warren Buffett, George Soros, and Bill and Melinda Gates can have a significant impact on global issues. Over the past two decades, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has donated tens of billions of dollars to, among other goals, reduce poverty, increase access to healthcare, and empower women.

Finally, noncelebrity individuals can have an impact on global issues as well. Leymah Gbowee provides an excellent example. Born in Liberia, Gbowee had a relatively unremarkable early life. However, as a teenager she experienced the first Liberian civil war. As the war drew to a close, she took part in a trauma-healing seminar sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). She later became a peace activist and led Muslim and Christian women in nonviolent, antiwar demonstrations. The protests gathered women in markets to pray and sing. She was also part of other creative nonviolent actions. For instance, in 2003, Gbowee and other women made their way into the hotel where Liberian leaders were holding peace talks. When the delegates tried to leave, the demonstrators blocked their exit and threatened to remove their own clothes. Since see-

ing an older or married woman naked is a great curse in their culture, the men remained in the hotel and continued negotiating. Based on these and other actions for peace in Liberia, Gbowee was a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011.

Similarly, Greta Thunberg, a Swedish environmental activist, has highlighted the threat of climate change. Her courageous advocacy received global attention in 2018 when, as a teenager, she skipped school to protest outside of the Swedish parliament. Armed with a sign that read "School Strike for Climate," Thunberg sat outside of parliament for the three weeks that led up to the Swedish election. Thunberg has inspired many by her commitment; in addition to the action at parliament, she refuses to fly in airplanes and became a vegan at the age of eight, due to the carbon emissions associated with airplane flight and eating meat. Thunberg is a sought-after speaker at global gatherings, which she travels to on an emissions-free yacht, and is known for her bold and stinging speeches. At the 2019 Climate Action Summit, held at UN headquarters in New York, she lamented the lack of action on climate change and criticized the growth-center development of world leaders. She told the delegates: "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!" (NPR 2019).

As we will see throughout this book, civil society actors are essential to finding solutions to global issues that are often ignored, or insufficiently addressed, by governmental actors.

Outline of the Book

This book is organized into three parts. Part 1 focuses on various dimensions of conflict and security. It considers some of the primary sources of conflict, such as weapons of mass destruction, nationalism, terrorism, and human rights abuses, as well as conflict over health, food security, and natural resources. The rationale for a broad view of "global security" is laid out in Chapter 2. Part 2 takes a broad view of the global political economy by including economic issues as well as social and environmental concerns. The content includes chapters on the centrality of ideas in the global political economy, international capital flows, international trade, strategies for development, population and migration, the role of women in development, sustainable development, and climate change. Part 3 discusses possible future world orders, sources of hope, challenges 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. From which perspective (individual, national, religious, global humanitarian) do you tend to view global issues?

5. Can you think of additional examples of how the global issues discussed in different chapters are interconnected?

Suggested Readings

Barber, Benjamin R. (1996) *Jihad vs. McWorld.* New York: Ballantine.

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