Unit 9 – Globalization

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# Unit 9 Introduction: Globalization, 1900–Present

Trevor Getz

The fall of the Soviet Union and decolonization did not “end history”. The interconnected world of today offers many opportunities but also deep problems for us all. The story continues.

## The end of history?

In December of 1991, when the Soviet Union broke up into fifteen different countries, most of which quickly embraced some form of a capitalist economic system, the Cold War came to an end. Decolonization didn’t end quite as neatly, but it probably can be said to have ended somewhere in the 1990s, perhaps in 1997, when the British handed the colony of Hong Kong back to China. So that’s that, right?

Well, no. If you’ve paid attention to this course, you know that historical narratives hardly ever really end. History has a legacy. The past continues to affect the present. For example, there are still communist states in the world, such as Cuba and (in some ways) China. Many people in the world still believe that socialism is a good idea, despite the Cold War victory of the United States over the Soviet Union. Colonialism has left an even longer legacy. Among other things, this legacy continues to shape ideas and opinions about whose culture is superior or inferior. In global economic structures, the ghosts of colonialism have left many former colonies impoverished while the richest companies in the world are based in former imperialist nations.

This unit is about globalization. Okay, the whole course is kind of about globalization, but this is where we’ll follow various types of worldwide connections and networks through time and place, armed with the knowledge and ideas of the earlier units. Like the Cold War and decolonization, historians argue about the dates of this thing we call globalization. We don’t argue about when it ended, but rather when it began. Did globalization begin around 1750, when the ideas that would give birth to the Industrial Revolution and liberal political revolutions crisscrossed the Atlantic? Or perhaps 1880, when industrial states rushed to build vast global empires? Or did it begin in 1914, with the first truly global war? Wait a minute—shouldn’t we really go back to 1492 when ship routes connected Afro- Eurasia and the Americas? Or did it only truly take off after the Second World War with mass media and passenger air travel? Depending on who you ask, globalization is as old as sailboats or as new as the Internet.

In this unit, while acknowledging that global connections go way back, we focus on globalization as a story beginning around 1900, and especially in the last half century or so. This era overlaps with the last three units—on empire, conflict, and the Cold War and decolonization. But it extends forward all the way to the early twenty-first century—within your own lifetime—as well. We call this era, from about 1945 to the present, an age of *intense globalization*. This means that globalization was deeper and wider than ever before. Now we try to understand this intense degree of globalization not just as one big trend, but also in terms of human experiences around the world. We interpret evidence to answer some fundamental questions about globalization: How alike, and how different were people living during this era, and to what degree? And what explains the similarities and differences among them, among us?

## States and networks of exchange in an age of intense globalization

Our study of the era of intense globalization starts with a look at issues familiar to anyone who has studied the past eight centuries—so lucky you! In this course, it began with our comparison of the structure of states and communities in different regions of the world beginning in the thirteenth century (Unit 1) and also the connections and exchange networks that spanned them (Unit 2). We then looked at the interacting empires of Afro-Eurasia (Unit 3) and the Columbian Exchange that connected this landmass to the Americas (Unit 4). It takes into account the revolutionary technologies of industrialization that brought our economic systems and communications closer together in the long nineteenth century (Unit 5), and the vast oceanic empires that created unequal trans-continental connections in the same period (Unit 6). Globalization made the two great wars of the first half of the twentieth century into “World Wars” (Unit 7), and also helped spread decolonization in the context of the global struggle that was the Cold War (Unit 8).

## Technology and environment in the age of intense globalization

Over this long story, we have seen how the Industrial Revolution gave us the ability to produce more goods, foods, and services, and to distribute them faster. As the Industrial Revolution remade our world over the past 250 or so years, our changing environment has introduced another issue. Industrialization, a booming human population, and the need to feed our growing population have together caused massive changes to the environment. These changes include increased pollution, the depletion of natural resources, the extinction of species, and—increasingly—climate change. We sometimes call this era in which humans have been the biggest influence on the environment, the *Anthropocene*. This environmental change has affected some people more than others. The demand for natural resources has started wars in some regions. Pollution is making people sicker, but again that depends on where you live. Other people have lost their farms or jobs or homes because of climate change. This is the lesson where we can finally study how the many changes brought on by globalization are affecting different parts of the world.

## Economics in the age of industrialization

In the last fifty years, the trends of industrialization only intensified, increasing global economic integration. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of communism almost everywhere meant the global economy was now dominated by capitalism. Even the last great communist state, China, became a major player in the global capitalist system. Almost everyone is now a participant in the global economy. Money, raw materials, and finished products fly across the world at great speed. But what has this global economy done to each of us? How has it affected people in different regions? In different kinds of jobs? In one lesson in this unit, we try to provide evidence to answer these questions, in particular by looking at the most dramatic example: the re-emergence of China as a global economic superpower.

## Rights, culture, and resistance on a global scale

Many political revolutions in this narrative of the last 800 years promised national sovereignty and truly egalitarian states. In reality, such rights have been extended only to some people. Whether because of race, gender, empire, or other restrictions, many people have not benefited from these changes. In another part of this unit, we look at people’s identities and globalized culture. Who do people identify with, and who do they feel they are? For better or worse, our recent human history has given us the option of feeling like members of a nation. But the twentieth century also gave us international identities. And we all feel like we belong to smaller communities—whether it’s our towns, or our families, or something else. How has globalization changed the groups we identify with? How is that different in different places? How have these experiences driven some people to embrace some parts of globalization, and to resist others!

This final unit brings our course up to date, but you’ve probably already guessed that it doesn’t end the narrative. By now, you should be able to see how the patterns of the past are impacting our own world. Maybe you are interested in the ways that the regions of the world have been drawn more closely together since 1200. Possibly you are more compelled by the ongoing results of the Columbian Exchange on different regions of the world. Or maybe you are interested in the ways in which political rights have expanded in some respect—and narrowed in others—since the liberal revolutions of the long nineteenth century. You could be more concerned about the ways that our global economy has grown, but not equally for everyone, since the Industrial Revolution.

In many ways, globalization is only the most recent step in all of these processes. Asking how these trends impact us today makes the past not just useful, but usable—and a usable past can help you to orient yourself to the present, and perhaps prepare for the future as the global story continues.

## Author Bio

Trevor Getz is a professor of African and world history at San Francisco State University. He has been the author or editor of 11 books, including the award-winning graphic history *Abina and the Important Men*, and has coproduced several prize-winning documentaries. Trevor is also the author of *A Primer for Teaching African History*, which explores questions about how we should teach the history of Africa in high school and university classes.

# Is the World Flat or Spiky?

Bridgette Byrd O’Connor

Some people see globalization as leveling the economic playing field. Others view the increasingly interconnected world as one of growing inequality. So which one is it: flat or spiky? You decide.

Globalization can be a controversial topic. Many see it as the way of the future, and why not? People are now more interconnected than ever before. This interconnection then propels new forms of cooperation and innovation. More opportunities for more people. Then again, some argue that globalization is creating even more inequality than we've ever seen at any point in history. The rich, industrialized countries are getting richer as a result of interconnection while the poorer developing nations are suffering.

## The world is flat

In 2005, Thomas L. Friedman's book *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* sparked a debate about just how much the world was benefitting from increased globalization. Friedman, a journalist for The New York Times, argues in his book that technological innovation has connected the world. And he sees this as a "flattening" of the world, as the global playing field is being leveled to include more input and contributions from nations outside the "industrialized West".

"Clearly, it is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world—using computers, e-mail, networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software…what the flattening of the world means is that we are now connecting all the knowledge centers on the planet together into a single global network, which—if politics and terrorism do not get in the way—could usher in an amazing era of prosperity and innovation" (Friedman, 8).

Friedman also describes globalization as going through three distinct stages, each driven by a "dynamic force".

(1) "The first [great era of globalization] lasted from 1492—when Columbus set sail, opening trade between the Old World and the New World—until around 1800…in Globalization 1.0 the key agent of change, the dynamic force driving the process of global integration was how much brawn—how much muscle, how much horsepower, wind power, or later steam power—your country had and how creatively you could deploy it. In this era, countries and governments (often inspired by religion or imperialism or a combination of both) led the way in breaking down walls and knitting the world together, driving global integration…

(2) The second great era, Globalization 2.0, lasted roughly from 1800 to 2000, interrupted by the Great Depression and World Wars I and II…In Globalization 2.0, the key agent of change, the dynamic force driving global integration was multinational companies. These multinationals went global for markets and labor, spearheaded first by the expansion of the Dutch and English joint-stock companies and the Industrial Revolution. In the first half of this era, global integration was powered by falling transportation costs, thanks to the steam engine and the railroad, and in the second half by falling telecommunication costs—thanks to the diffusion of the telegraph, telephones, the PC, satellites, fiber-optic cable, and the early version of the World Wide Web. It was during this era that we really saw the birth and maturation of a global economy in the sense that there was enough movement of goods and information from continent to continent for there to be a global market…

(3) Globalization 3.0 is shrinking the world…and flattening the playing field at the same time…The dynamic force in Globalization 3.0—the thing that gives it its unique character—is the newfound power for individuals to collaborate and compete globally. And the lever that is enabling individuals and groups to go global so easily and so seamlessly is not horsepower and not hardware, but software—all sorts of new applications—in conjunction with the creation of a global fiber-optic network that has made us all next door neighbors" (Friedman, 9-10).

## The world is spiky[[1]](#footnote-1)

While Friedman's theory sounds interesting and compelling, the book received a lot of criticism both from economists in the industrialized world and from advocates in the developing world. Richard Florida, a professor at the University of Toronto, wrote a review of Friedman's work in *The Atlantic Monthly* and counterpunched the flattening world idea by saying the world is actually pretty "spiky" with economic disparities.

"The world, according to the title of the New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman's book, is flat. Thanks to advances in technology, the global playing field has been leveled, the prizes are there for the taking, and everyone's a player—no matter where on the surface of the earth he or she may reside. 'In a flat world,' Friedman writes, 'you can innovate without having to emigrate.'…

By almost any measure the international economic landscape is not at all flat. On the contrary, our world is amazingly 'spiky.' In terms of both sheer economic horsepower and cutting-edge innovation, surprisingly few regions truly matter in today's global economy. What's more, the tallest peaks—the cities and regions that drive the world economy—are growing ever higher, while the valleys mostly languish [get lower and weaker].

The most obvious challenge to the flat-world hypothesis is the explosive growth of cities worldwide. More and more people are clustering in urban areas—the world's demographic mountain ranges, so to speak. The share of the world's population living in urban areas, just three percent in 1800, was nearly 30 percent by 1950. Today it stands at about 50 percent; in advanced countries three out of four people live in urban areas…

Still, differences in population density vastly understate the spikiness of the global economy; the continuing dominance of the world's most productive urban areas is astounding. When it comes to actual economic output, the ten largest U.S. metropolitan areas combined are behind only the United States as a whole and Japan. New York's economy alone is about the size of Russia's or Brazil's, and Chicago's is on a par with Sweden's…

But the flat-world theory blinds us to far more insidious [dangerous] tensions among the world's growing peaks, sinking valleys, and shifting hills. The innovative, talent-attracting 'have' regions seem increasingly remote from the talent-exporting 'have-not' regions…And inequality is growing across the world and within countries.

This is far more harrowing [disturbing] than the flat world Friedman describes, and a good deal more treacherous than the old rich-poor divide. We see its effects in the political backlash against globalization in the advanced world."

In another critique, the activist and environmentalist Dr. Vandana Shiva writes about how Friedman seems to only focus upon the beneficial effects of technology while leaving out globalization's effects on inequality.

"The project of corporate Globalization is a project for polarising and dividing people—along axis of class and eco- nomic inequality, axis of religion and culture, axis of gender, axis of geographies and regions. Never before in hu- man history has the gap between those who labor and those who accumulate wealth without labor been greater. Never before has hate between cultures been so global…

Yet Thomas Friedman, describes this deeply divided world created by Globalization and its multiple offspring's of insecurity and polarization as a 'flat' world. In his book 'The World is Flat' Friedman tries desperately to argue that Globalization is a leveller of inequalities in societies. But when you only look at the worldwide Web of information technology, and refuse to look at the web of life, the food web, the web of community, the web of local economies and local cultures which Globalization is destroying, it is easy to make false and fallacious [misleading] arguments that the world is flat…

Telling a one sided story for a one sided interest seems to be Friedman's fate. That is why he talks of 550 million Indian youth overtaking Americans in a flat world. When the entire information Technology/outsourcing sector in India employs only a million out of a 1.2 billion people. Food and farming, textiles and clothing, health and education are nowhere in Friedman's monoculture of mind locked into IT. Friedman presents a 0.1% picture and hides 99.9%. And in the 99.9% are Monsanto's seed monopolies and the suicides of thousands of wars. In the eclipsed 99.9% are the 25 million women who disappeared in high growth areas of India because a commodified world has rendered women a dispensable sex. In the hidden 99.9% economy are thousands of tribal children in Orissa, Maharashtra, Rajasthan who died of hunger because the public distribution system for food has been dismantled to create markets for agribusiness. The world of the 99.9% has grown poorer because of the economic globalization."

So which one is it? Is the world flattening or is it spiky? It's not an easy question to answer. In addition, your perspective, which could include your region, gender, age, and socio-economic standing, also shapes how you view the world and this issue. But maybe if we take all of these factors into account then we can decide on a more nuanced [refined] approach to answering this problem.

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# Conflict Over Natural Resources

Jeff Spoden

People have always killed each other over resources. The twentieth century was no exception, as empires and nation-states battled for control of resources that have become increasingly scarce.

Water. You turn on the faucet and it spills out. You flush the toilet and the nasty stuff you just deposited disappears. You probably take it for granted. But have you ever considered that although the Earth is covered in water, only .03 percent is fit for consumption? That means 99.7 percent of the planet's water is unusable! Humans dump about 2 million tons of sewage and waste into the world's waters every day. Almost 1 billion people cannot access clean water. With a growing global population, it's a recipe for disaster. Could a water shortage cause a war? No really, search the Web for, "Will wars be fought over water?" and you'll find many organizations, think-tanks, and writers, answering with a worried "Yes."

We are often taught that wars have political causes—that they are conflicts over global power or nationalist pride. But as the climate changes, it seems more and more likely that future conflicts will be fought over access to natural resources. That's not new. The major conflicts of the twentieth century were motivated, entirely or partially, by access to natural resources. If water motivates future wars, they might resemble past wars over gold, silver, oil, forests, copper, oil, aluminum, bananas, oil, and hundreds of other resources possessed by one group and wanted by another.

## The big wars and colonialism

Conflict over resources played a part in the most devastating wars of the twentieth century. Many history books explain the causes of World War I as nationalistic antagonism, military build-up, and the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand. But behind it all was the competition for African and Asian resources. European powers carved up Africa and competed with each other in Asia in a relentless pursuit of colonies. They needed to feed their growing industries, and colonies provided both the natural resources and cheap labor to extract them. Britain and France built global empires in the nineteenth century. Germany was late to the game of colonial conquest and wanted to "catch up" to its European economic rivals. Fierce competition for colonies and their resources was a big cause of World War I.

Like most sequels, World War II was more of the same, but worse. There were major economic components. In the European theater, Adolph Hitler wanted to rule Europe, providing the German people with more Lebensraum—"living space." He also wanted access to the resources required to compete with economic giants such as the U.S. In the Pacific theater, Japan wanted its own empire to rival those of the United States and Europe. Japan attacked China and expanded in other parts of Asia. The United States responded with an embargo (stoppage of trade) against Japan. They refused to sell oil, rubber, iron, and other raw materials necessary for industrial growth and Japan's war with China. Desperate for resources—particularly oil—Japanese military leaders invaded Southeast Asia (Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya, Vietnam, etc.). They also decided that to get colonies, the American Navy would have to be crippled. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese navy bombed the American fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The United States immediately declared war on Japan and entered World War II.

## Decolonization—Messy breakups

After the two world wars, colonized peoples rose up to reject colonial political control. But anti-colonial leaders knew that their long-term political stability and independence depended on their ability to control their nation's wealth of natural resources. In this context, the wars that were fought to overthrow colonial rule, gain independence, and establish self-governance were also conflicts over natural resources. Here are three examples:

1. Egypt: In 1956, after Britain's withdrawal, Gamal Abdel-Nasser became president and immediately seized control of the nation's resources. He redistributed land from wealthy landowners to farmers. He nationalized[[2]](#footnote-2) the Suez Canal, an important waterway linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea—because whoever controlled the canal also controlled oil shipments from the Middle East to Europe. That's why Britain, France, and Israel invaded, in a failed attempt to return control of the canal to the British.
2. French Indochina (Vietnam): Another popular nationalist leader, Ho Chi Minh, led North Vietnamese forces against Japanese, French, and American occupying armies from 1941 until his death in 1969. Indochina had provided rubber, tin, timber, tungsten, and bauxite[[3]](#footnote-3) to the French Empire since the mid-nineteenth century.
3. Dutch East Indies (Indonesia): After World War II, national leaders declared Indonesia's independence from the Netherlands. The Dutch refused, wanting to maintain easy access to Indonesia's oil, timber, copper, coal, tin, and bauxite. A four-year guerrilla war finally convinced the Dutch to leave.

## Neocolonialism

Though colonial empires started disappearing after 1945, the former colonial powers continued to dominate the economies and resources of decolonized nations. Western capitalist nations gave up "official" control of their colonies, but as buyers of resources, they still had unofficial power over many places in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In these places, the economic structures—created by colonialism—made them dependent on their former colonizers for financial and humanitarian aid. It was actually Western corporations, more than governments, that many former colonies now needed to keep their economies afloat. Those businesses employed their people (at very low pay) and bought their resources.

In many places, such as Iran and Guatemala, these corporations—backed by Western states—meddled in local politics. Some scholars call this "neocolonialism." The goals of neocolonialism are economic: Access to natural resources and cheap labor. A growing middle class of American consumers after 1945 demanded more consumer goods. American companies turned to the decolonizing world for cheap raw materials to feed this demand. While African, Asian, and Latin American countries were breaking free from colonial rule, their economies were still very much dominated by the United States, Britain, and France.

## Black gold

And what was the most important of these resources? Oil. Since geologists determined that the Earth's largest supply of easily extractable oil was under the Middle East, there have been many struggles for control of this precious resource. The Suez Canal example is one of many. In 1953, Iran's prime minister, Mohammed Mosaddegh, nationalized the country's oilfields. American and British intelligence agencies—in support of a British oil corporation—overthrew Mosaddegh's government. In the 1980s, Iran and Iraq fought a war in which both sides bombed oil refineries on land and oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. In 1991, Iraq invaded Kuwait, claiming that Kuwait was draining the oil deposit under both countries. The United States responded by invading Iraq. In 2003, when the Americans again invaded Iraq, part of the justification for war was to take away Iraq's ability to use "weapons of mass destruction," but another motivation was American control of Iraqi oil fields.

## Banana republic—Not a clothing store

Oil might be more valuable, but the humble banana has also provoked violent conflicts. Multinational corporations have turned huge profits from banana crops in the twentieth century. And they have violently defended those profits. For example, United Fruit, a U.S. company, made billions growing bananas in Central and South America. In the process, the company paid off politicians, hired thugs to terrorize workers, and orchestrated the overthrow of governments.

In 1954, Jacobo Arbenz, the newly elected president of Guatemala, nationalized land owned by United Fruit and gave it to peasants. In response, the wealthy and influential United Fruit executives called their friends in the American government. The CIA bombed Guatemala's capital and initiated a coup that drove Arbenz from the country. Thus began 50 years of struggle for workers and peasants, 200,000 of whom have been killed, fighting one dictatorial regime after another.

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, these scenes have played out across the globe, with powerful corporations claiming the best land to grow cash crops such as bananas, coffee, tea, cocoa, and other commodities for consumption by people in the United States and Europe. The poor are forced onto less productive land, or into already crowded cities, and cycles of poverty continue. Some rebel against the corrupt politicians who profit from this system. These rebellions, revolutions, and civil wars are as much about access to resources as the imperialist conquests of the nineteenth century. After such conflicts, common people still don't have access to the resources they need, while the wealth of their nation flows to their former colonizers.

Which leads us back to water. In the past 15 years, there have been at least 100 conflicts—most of them bloodless—over access to water. But as drinkable water becomes scarcer and the Earth's population grows, will water conflicts remain non-violent? Will the rich nations of the world drain water from poorer countries as they have with most other resources? Will revolutions be fought by common people who refuse to let their children die from contaminated water? These and other questions will become more important as climate change reduces access to fresh water.

## Author Bio

Jeff Spoden is a retired social studies teacher who spent 33 years in the classroom. He taught US history, world history, sociology, international relations, and the history of American popular music.

# The Trouble with Globalization

Andalusia Knoll Soloff

Globalization enthusiasts say it creates opportunity for all, but as communities around the world have discovered, it has significant costs. The elimination of trade barriers keeps the price of sneakers low, but how does it affect the factory-workers on the other side of the globe who make those sneakers?

On New Year's Day of 1994, a group of indigenous Mayan guerrillas, known as the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) launched a coordinated attack across the southern state of Chiapas, Mexico. Hundreds of humble farmers were armed with machetes and outdated rifles, and they were disguised with ski masks and red paisley bandanas. They took over government buildings and read a statement in Spanish that emphasized the phrase: *Ya basta*, meaning, "Enough is enough."

The timing was no coincidence. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was to take effect that same day. The landmark agreement was supposed to decrease trade barriers and increase business investment between Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. On signing NAFTA, U.S. President Bill Clinton said, "We have to create a new world economy." He celebrated that the trade agreement would be "our opportunity to provide an impetus to freedom and democracy in Latin America and create new jobs for America as well."

But the Zapatistas and other subsistence farmers believed NAFTA would be their economic death, because it would flood Mexico with imported corn, seriously devaluing the crop that paid for their livelihood. Corn growers in the United States received government subsidies (financial aid) to the tune of $20,000 a year each, but in Mexico the farmers only got about $100. That meant U.S. corn sold in Mexico was ultimately much cheaper than what Mexican farmers could grow locally. They simply could not compete, having started the race already $19,900 behind.

As a result, millions of Mexican farmers migrated to the United States over the next decade. NAFTA, instead of bolstering the Mexican economy, effectively lowered wages there and drove the Mexican consumer's purchasing power down by an average of 24 percent. At the same time, Clinton had promoted NAFTA saying it would create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the U.S. to produce the goods that would be exported to Mexico. But that's not what happened. It is estimated that within the first 15 years of NAFTA's implementation, close to 700,000 jobs were lost in the U.S. as well.

Instead, hundreds of electronics factories opened in Mexico's Ciudad Juarez, right by the U.S. border. Mexicans migrated there from across their vast country to work long hours for miserably low wages. At the same time, workers in the U.S. complained about the loss of jobs as factories moved south to another country. Usually when workers need more protection, the best option is to form a union. However, any factory workers in the U.S. who talked about unionizing were met with threats by company bosses who said that they would sooner shut the factory down.

In the late 1990's Ciudad Juarez was a dangerous place. Many young women disappeared on their way to and from the *maquiladoras*—that's the word for factories in Mexico that are run by foreign companies to make exports to that company's country. The city was a killing field, as women's bodies were later found in the desert, abandoned near the same factories that had lured them with abundant work. To this day, most of these murders remain unsolved and the factories continue to operate.

The Zapatistas meanwhile, declared themselves autonomous (independent) from the Mexican government. They started their own farming cooperatives, built their own schools and even operated their own government centers. These resistance strategies have protected the Zapatistas from many of NAFTA's negative effects. Today their numbers are estimated at 250,000 people, and across the world they are seen as a powerful symbol of anti-globalization.

## The rise of the anti-globalization movement

In 1999, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was set to meet in the city of Seattle. The plan was to discuss how to reduce tariffs and lift barriers to global trade among its 134 member states. At the break of dawn on November 30th, 1999, as the WTO delegates made their way across Seattle, tens of thousands of protestors blocked the streets so the delegates could not reach the convention hall. The protestors were using a tactic called direct action, where they physically put their bodies on the line to protest what they saw as injustice.

These protests became known as "The Battle of Seattle". Riot police responded with heavy-handed tactics, including pepper spray, tear gas, and mass arrests, but ultimately the Seattle Police were not prepared for a protest this big. The WTO delegates could not get past the protesters, and were unable to attend. The negotiations were called off.

The delegates of the World Trade Organization argued that global trade rules between nations allow for a more prosperous, peaceful, world—economically speaking. Critics say these trade rules provoke a "race to the bottom," with corporate profits taking priority over regulations meant to protect laborers and the environment.

These effective protests gave birth to an independent media movement. When the traditional media characterized the protestors as violent vandals, the activists were able to do their own reporting and flip the script. Protestors told their side of their story to the world—quite an achievement since this was before we had blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. They called themselves Indymedia and their call to action was: "Don't criticize the media, be the media."

Within a few years, Indymedia expanded to 35 countries with 200 local Indymedia sites in over 15 languages. The sites connected a network of those resisting globalization, and Indymedia would be a key resource in protests of other institutions that promoted globalization and world trade. These included the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the G20.

As numbers of protestors swelled outside the gatherings of this financial organization, the stakes grew higher. In 2001 Carlo Giuliani was shot and killed by riot police while protesting the G8 meetings that took place in Genoa, Italy. In 2003, at the WTO protests in Cancun, Mexico, Lee Kyung Hae, a South Korean farmer stabbed himself to death while a sign hung around his neck stating "The WTO kills farmers."

In the following years, the global political and corporate elite met in isolated, exclusive locations where they could not be shut down by protests.

## Does globalization create global prosperity?

Not everyone hates globalization. Its advocates believe that trading on a global level can be a powerful force for social good in the world and encourage prosperity in developing nations. They argue that opening markets and eliminating trade barriers helps transnational corporations open factories in countries that need them. The idea is that this creates jobs and reduces poverty.

Your clothes are evidence that globalization created jobs in the global south. Read the tags on your shoes, shirt, and pants. Were they made in China, Honduras, Bangladesh or some other distant part of the globe? But then think: If your shoes cost $100, how much do you think the person who glued their soles on got paid for each pair of shoes? How many hours do you think they would need to work to be able to purchase a pair? What kind of conditions do you think they work in?

Nike is the world's largest athletic apparel maker in the world and arguably the most popular sneaker with a highly recognizable logo. In recent years Nike has hailed itself as a "social justice" company with a new campaign featuring social justice advocate Colin Kaepernick[[4]](#footnote-4). They also ran a campaign encouraging women to break free of the limits society puts on them.

But wait for the other sneaker to drop. Nike's factories around the world also have a long history of abuses. In 1997, an accounting firm documented how workers at a factory making Nike products in Vietnam were exposed to toxic chemicals, forced to work 65 hours a week, and earned only $10 dollars. Nike tried to dodge responsibility saying that the factory was really run by subcontractors[[5]](#footnote-5). The company was eventually pressured by international watchdogs to set labor standards, but investigations have shown that they still do not comply with these standards. In 2011, workers at Nike's Converse shoe factory in Indonesia protested that their "supervisors throw shoes at them, slap them in the face and call them dogs and pigs."

Nike is just one example of a transnational corporation that benefits from increased global trade and low tariffs. While it has created hundreds of thousands of jobs across the world, that has not necessarily created prosperity. In fact, global inequality has risen exponentially over the past 30 years. In the United States alone, the top .001 percent earned 636% more in 2014 than what they earned in 1980 while there was no increase in income for the bottom half of earners.

## Austerity and the down-side of globalization

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was formed after World War II and is one of the pillars of neoliberal globalization. Its goal is to allow countries to borrow from countries as a way to promote "financial stability, foster global cooperation, facilitate trade and growth, as well as reduce poverty."

The IMF encourages governments to cut spending on social services and implement "austerity" (very strict and limiting) measures. This often means cutting government subsidies for gas and public transit. For students and working-class people who primarily use public transit to go to and from school and work, losing those subsidies can be devastating.

In 2010 Greece faced an economic depression and was bailed out by the European Union and the IMF. This forced the country to implement austerity measures such as increased taxes, an overhaul of the pension and health system, as well as a reduction in salaries for workers already receiving low wages. People protested in the streets for months.

In 2018 Haiti sought financial aid from the IMF. The institution said it would help as long as Haiti put an end to energy subsidies. This raised fuel prices, and in July of that year there were massive protests against the government that turned violent, resulting in 17 deaths and hundreds of injuries.

## Conclusion

Is it possible for globalization to benefit all parts of the world? Is there a way to promote global trade without harming those doing the physical work while only benefiting consumers? Is it better to provide difficult, poorly paid factory work to regions where there otherwise aren't any jobs? Advocates of austerity measures and global trade believe that their policies will help promote global prosperity. But Greece, Haiti and other examples have shown us that this is not the case and that inequality keeps rising. If these policies stay in place, what will the future look like?

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## Author Bio

Andalusia Knoll Soloff is a multimedia journalist based in Mexico City whose work has been published by *Al Jazeera, Teen Vogue, Democracy Now!, VICE News, BBC, NBC, The Intercept,* and *Latino USA*, among other outlets. Her reporting focuses on human resilience and dignity in the face of disappearances, state violence, land struggles and gender-based murders in Latin America. Andalusia is the author of the graphic novel *Alive You Took Them,* which is about the 43 missing Ayotzinapa students.

# The Anthropocene

Cynthia Stokes Brown

In 2000, a Nobel Prize-winning chemist suggested that humans have greatly altered the planet. The chemist, Paul Crutzen, believes we have brought on a new epoch. He named it the Anthropocene using Anthropo which is the Greek root for "human".

## The case for the Anthropocene

For the first time in the history of life on Earth, a single species, humans, has gained the capacity to greatly change the entire biosphere.

Geologists have worked out a system of naming large segments of Earth's time. Thousands of years are called "epochs." Tens of millions of years are "periods." Hundreds of millions of years are "eras." The longest measurements of time are called "eons." Geologists call our current epoch the Holocene. It started about 10,000 years ago, when temperatures stabilized after the last ice age. The word Holocene comes from Greek roots: *holo* meaning "whole" and *cene* meaning "new." Hence, Holocene means "wholly new."

In 2000, a Nobel Prize-winning chemist suggested that we are in a new epoch—the Anthropocene. The chemist, Paul Crutzen, proposed that human domination has altered the planet greatly and thus brought on a new epoch. *Anthropo* is the Greek root for "human." The name Anthropocene has not been officially adopted, but many geologists have begun using it[[6]](#footnote-6).

But why should we care about this name change? This means that it's the first time scientists have seen one species, humans, having an impact that has greatly altered the planet. Unfortunately, these changes have been almost entirely negative.

## Evidence of change

What kind of evidence could demonstrate that humans have begun to dominate and alter the life systems of Earth? The most prominent answer is by now a familiar one: climate change[[7]](#footnote-7). Driven by an average rise in temperatures around the world of about 1 degree Celsius, a number of serious effects are now occurring. Plants and animals are moving northward. Glaciers are melting. Storms and droughts are getting more severe. Weather patterns are changing and global temperatures are rising. Behind these weather patterns are changes in the Earth's atmosphere that scientists can track over geologic time.

A tiny part of Earth's atmosphere is made up of "greenhouse gases." These gases hold in heat reflected from Earth and do not let it escape into space. One of these greenhouse gases is carbon dioxide (CO2). During the past million years, CO2 ranged from 180 parts per million (ppm) to 280 ppm—due to processes not affected by humans. Since the beginning of human agriculture, the atmospheric concentration of CO2 has risen from 280 ppm to the current (2017) level of 405 ppm[[8]](#footnote-8). This rise happened much faster than ever before. It was mostly due to humans burning fossil fuels in the last 250 years.

In order to keep our climate from devastatingly warming, leading scientists urge us to reduce the concentration of CO2 to 350 ppm. Because CO2 lingers in the atmosphere for thousands of years, the CO2 that has been put into the air in the 1900s continues to contribute to warming. If we are to curb that effect, scientists tell us that global emissions (release) of CO2 must be cut by 50 percent by 2030 and fall to net zero by the year 2050. However, from 2014-2016 worldwide emissions increased by 1.6 percent. In addition, the increase for 2018 was 2.7 percent. Emissions in both China and India rose by almost 5 percent and more than 6 percent respectively, reflecting the rate at which these countries' emissions continue to grow as they industrialize. The United States' emission increased by 2.5 percent. However, emissions in the European Union decreased by almost 1 percent. The United Nations Secretary General António Guterres issued a stark warning at the 24th annual U.N. climate conference in 2018 stating, "We are in trouble. We are in deep trouble with climate change…It is hard to overstate the urgency of our situation. Even as we witness devastating climate impacts causing havoc across the world, we are still not doing enough, nor moving fast enough, to prevent irreversible and catastrophic climate disruption" (*Washington Post*).

You might think that natural changes in climate occur slowly and gradually, but it doesn't always happen that way. Sometimes, like at the end of the last ice age, change speeds up because of feedback cycles. For example, when glaciers at the poles melt, there is less area of whiteness to reflect some of the Sun's heat back into space. Instead, the heat is absorbed into the land and water, warming it and causing more melting of the glaciers, which then reflect even less heat. The feedback cycle continues.

It's not only the atmosphere that has been changed by CO2 emissions. The chemistry of the oceans has changed as a significant amount of the CO2 in the air dissolves into the oceans. As more CO2 is absorbed into the oceans, it makes the water more acidic, endangering the life of creatures that form calcium shells that disintegrate under too much acid. Runoff from fertilizers and pesticides contributes as well. It causes strange accumulations of harmful algae, called blooms. Widespread overfishing threatens marine species worldwide. Our production and distribution of plastics is also affecting the oceans and the species that live in it. The effects of human use of fossil fuels in the creation of plastics is also a worrying concern. Both large and microscopic pieces of plastic as well as oil runoff and spills enter the waterways and become hazardous to life in our oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams.

More than just sea life is at risk. The biodiversity of all sectors of the planet is declining faster than usual. Reports put the present rate of decline as between a hundred and a thousand times the normal rate. Up to half of all species face extinction in the twenty-first century. Many biologists believe the current extinction, which is occurring right now, will rank as one of Earth's six major ones.

Another way that humans are changing Earth's systems lies in our ability to create artificial chemicals. These include drugs, pesticides, plastics, and synthetic fabrics. Earth is absorbing these chemicals, with unknown side effects.

Nuclear energy is another powerful force that humans have developed. The buildup of radiation in the environment from nuclear bomb testing and use as well as from nuclear energy waste and accidents has affected the Earth's environment. The United States first tested and then used nuclear bombs as weapons of war in 1945. A number of nations have performed similar tests in their quest to obtain nuclear weapons. In addition, increased levels of radiation on Earth have resulted from nuclear power waste and fallout from nuclear disasters at Three Mile Island (US), Chernobyl (Ukraine), and Fukushima (Japan). Exposure to radiation can damage or mutate the cells of all living organisms.

The evidence above comes from biologists and climate scientists. But geologists have a very specific way of determining historical periods. They look for evidence in the rocks, or at least in layers of mud that will become rock. And even in the mud they are finding evidence of environmental harm. Worldwide sediments contain radiation from atomic bomb testing in the 1960s. Similar evidence of chlorine from bomb testing and of mercury associated with the burning of coal also exists in ice-core samples.

Environmental historians support the claims of geologists. Scholar John McNeill wrote an environmental history of the twentieth-century world called *Something New Under the Sun*. In it he asserts that "the human race, without intending anything of the sort, has undertaken a gigantic uncontrolled experiment on the Earth."

## Going forward

There are differing opinions about what these changes might bring and how humans might be able to overcome them. James Lovelock, an English scientist, believes that humans are no longer able to control change. He believes the planet will be returned to some kind of equilibrium, which may not support much human life. According to Lovelock, the best we can do is try to adapt to the changes.

Others believe humans are clever enough to find our way out of any tight spot. We can use our collective learning to create new ideas, new technologies, and new solutions. In fact, human communities have survived previous crises. Why can't we do it again?

Geologists continue to debate other questions: When did the Anthropocene begin? How do we know when we have reached the critical point of human influence on the Earth? Just considering these questions has allowed scientists to examine contemporary change. Meanwhile, people have to face this decisive period in planetary history. Human decisions made in the near past and those made in the near future will determine the direction of life on our planet.

Many leading scientists and journalists believe that we have at most 10 years to change our destructive behavior and to implement new technologies. Otherwise, humans could face a breakdown in our planet's life-support systems. It will take the commitment, innovation, and cooperation of a large portion of all humans on the planet to safely make these changes.

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## Author Bio

Cynthia Stokes Brown was an American educator-historian. Stokes Brown wrote *Big History: From the Big Bang to the Present*. Using the term Big History, coined by David Christian at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, Stokes Brown told the whole story from the Big Bang to the present in simple, non-academic language to convey our common humanity and our connection to every other part of the natural world.

# Population and Environmental Trends, 1880 to the Present

Bridgette Byrd O’Connor

Our changing climate is one of the most talked-about current events—for good reason. It’s a story we are in the middle of, that began with industrialization, and ends when… well now that’s a good question.

## Introduction

It can be hard to grasp the impacts of climate change. Data sets, complex vocabulary, and confusing political views further complicate our understanding of this long-term, global concern. So how can we make sense of the overwhelming amount of information that's out there? One way is to look at how environmental changes since 1880 have been intertwined with industrialization and enormous increases in the global population.

The Industrial Revolution changed how we work, where we live, and how many of us there are. Innovations in machinery that propelled industry and improved agriculture produced enough food for a population explosion. Labor underwent massive changes, as more people moved to cities for factory jobs. Human migration changed communities and created new cultural and economic networks of exchange. These new networks connected and further globalized the world.

By 1880, industrialization had spread throughout the world. It benefitted some a lot more than others. European nations and the U.S. gained the most. These wealthy, industrialized nations extracted resources from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to fuel their own growth. By the end of the nineteenth century, this uneven system of exchange affected everyone on Earth one way or another.

## Population explosion

We know industrial acceleration and globalization caused population growth. In 1803 the global population reached 1 billion for the first time. But that took thousands of years. Then, industrialization took off. And in just 150 years, from 1803 to 1950, the global population more than doubled to reach 2.5 billion. Then, by 1987, it had doubled again and we were at 5 billion!

To put that in perspective, it took almost seven centuries (900 C.E. to 1500 C.E) for the population to increase from a quarter billion to half a billion. But it took only two centuries for the world population to jump from one billion to a staggering 7,600,000,000 today. And much of that growth can be linked to the effects of industrialization, namely food production.

Table 1: Total Population by Region (in millions, rounded)[[9]](#footnote-9)

| Region | 1820 | 1900 | 1950 | 2000 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| North America | 12 | 82 | 173 | 313 |
| Central and South America | 24 | 66 | 169 | 526 |
| Africa | 89 | 141 | 229 | 818 |
| Europe | 219 | 421 | 549 | 727 |
| Asia | 745 | 939 | 1400 | 3730 |
| Oceania | 1 | 5 | 13 | 31 |
| World | 1090 | 1654 | 2533 | 6145 |

However, there were also periods when the population fell dramatically in a short period of time. These drops were caused by disasters like the two world wars and global epidemics like the influenza outbreak of 1914. Industrialization played a part as well. Technological breakthroughs and mass production of weapons made war deadlier, and improved transportation helped deadly germs to spread faster and farther. However, innovations in medicine, transportation, and communication—all products of industrialization—let the population recover faster than it ever had in the past.

## Increased urbanization

After 1800, the areas where population increased the most were cities. People were migrating to cities for work long before industrialization. But the urban growth rate really increased after industrialization spread outside of Europe beginning around 1800. For example, in 1800 no region in the world had more than 13 percent of their population living in cities. By 2000, these numbers skyrocketed, as the table below shows. In fact, in 2008, for the first time in human history, the percentage of people living in urban areas was more than those living in rural areas. And by 2017, there were 4.13 billion people living in cities versus 3.4 billion in rural areas. The urbanization trend isn't showing any signs of slowing down.

Urbanization may have been good for employment, but it was generally bad for your health. As more people lived in close proximity, disease and pollution increased accordingly. However, over time, innovations in medicine and sanitation took care of some of these problems.

Advances in medicine also increased life expectancy. In the late nineteenth century, people only lived an average of 30 years! By the early twenty-first century, the global average was up to 71 years. If a 41-year increase in just over a century sounds normal, compare that with the previous hundred years. Life expectancy went from 29 years in 1770 to the ripe old age of 30 for folks in 1870. However, these numbers did vary around the world. Increases in life expectancy have been more pronounced in areas that industrialized first. Developing economies, such as those in Africa and Southeast Asia, have seen more modest climbs.

Table 2: City Life: Percentage of Urban Population by Region

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Region | 1800 | 1900 | 1950 | 2000 |
| North America | 6.6% | 33% | 56% | 77.6% |
| Central and South America | 8.6% | 24.3% | 39.6% | 72% |
| Africa | 3% | 6% | 16.5% | 38.7% |
| Europe (not including Russia) | 12.5% | 30% | 48% | 67.5% |
| West and Central Asia | 3.4% | 13.6% | 32.8% | 61.6% |
| South and East Asia | 4.8% | 11.6% | 19.8% | 46.8% |
| Oceania | 8% | 35% | 72% | 82% |
| World | 7% | 16% | 29% | 47% |

## Environmental changes

Analyzing rising population and life expectancy may make it seem as though everything got better over this period of time. Unfortunately, that's not entirely the case. Yes, we have seen tremendous improvements in life expectancy and technological innovations, but industrialization has its downfalls. The industrial world depends on fossil fuels, and burning them has hurt the environment.

For 400,000 years, the carbon dioxide level never exceeded 300 parts per million (ppm). Even in the first two centuries of industrialization, CO2 levels stayed below this threshold. Then as a result of increasing industrialization after World War II, CO2 levels exceeded 300 ppm for the first time in human history, and continued to rise. Current levels of CO2 are now at 415 ppm. So why does this matter and how does this relate to population growth?

High levels of CO2 in the atmosphere cause global temperatures to rise. We are already 1 degree Celsius above what's normal. The rise in CO2 and global temperatures cause ice at the poles to melt, making sea levels rise. Human communities living near coastal areas are endangered by rising sea levels, and so are animal habitats. Considering nearly half of the human population currently lives within 100 miles of a major body of water, these rising waters will be a major challenge of the future.

But it is not just species on land that are threatened. The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released a report in 2019 detailing CO2 increases in Earth's oceans.

"The global ocean absorbed 34 billion metric tons of carbon from the burning of fossil fuels from 1994 to 2008—a fourfold increase of 2.6 billion metric tons per year when compared to the period starting...1800 to 1994" (NOAA).

These increases make the oceans more acidic, endangering marine life. Shellfish, for example have more difficulty producing their calcium carbonate protection (shell) because of the water's increased acidity. Luckily, the oceans absorb some of the CO2 that would otherwise lead to ever-increasing temperatures. However, an important question is whether the oceans can sustain these increases in CO2 absorption.

Carbon dioxide levels and other pollutants have been increasing since the early nineteenth century. Burning coal to power factories, trains, and ships bathed whole cities in soot with noxious air—a grim image we often associate with the early decades of industrialization. As new engines were developed that relied on oil and gas, more pollutants were then released into the atmosphere and waterways. And as the global population doubled twice in the twentieth century, more resources, more production, and more fuel was needed. More people required electricity, usually generated from the burning of coal. More people required transportation, which led to more oil and gas for cars, buses, trains, and planes. More, more, more.

By the mid-twentieth century, people were feeling the effects of fossil fuel use. In 1948 and 1952, Donora, Pennsylvania and London, England had drastic episodes of toxic air pollution that caused more than 4,000 deaths. In the 1960s, scientists and governments began to call for environmental legislation to help alleviate some of the more dangerous side-effects of industrialization. Many of these actions helped reduce pollution. For example, volatile (dangerous) organic compounds that cause smog decreased by a factor of 50 in Los Angeles from 1960 to 2010, even though the number of gas-powered vehicles went up. However, we still have much more to do. Carbon dioxide levels plateaued (stopped rising) in the early twenty-first century but are now rising again.

Climate scientists around the world warn that if we do not act quickly to reduce emissions, both the Earth and humanity may be doomed.

## So now what?

Collectively, humanity must cooperate. If we lower CO2 levels and curb plastic use, we can, with effort and collaboration, replace these fuels with renewable energy resources like solar, wind, and water power. But what can we do as individuals to help our community and our planet?

Jane Goodall, a noted primatologist and environmental activist, was recently asked what we can do today to help tomorrow. She said, "Everyday you live you make some impact. So start thinking about the consequences of the little choices you make. What do you buy? Where did it come from? Did it harm the environment?" If the majority of Earth's 7.6 billion population took the time to think about these choices on a daily basis then collectively, we could dramatically change the way we interact with the environment.

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# Environmentalism

Mike Burns

Humans have always changed their environments. But since the Industrial Revolution, change has accelerated, threatening the water we drink and the air we breathe. In the nineteenth century, networks of activists organized to address this problem.

## Human environments through history

Pop quiz: You're walking through a forest—not just a park with trees, but an actual forest—away from noisy cars and human-made structures. You realize that the purpose of a forest is to be:

1. a distinct biome—meaning a community of plants and animals that have common characteristics for the environment in which they live.
2. an area rich in natural resources that could be utilized for human benefit.
3. a world inhabited by unseen creatures and spirits.
4. a fragile system in need of protection.

Humans throughout history have acted upon all of these ideas and beliefs, so there is no agreement on the right answer.

For much of our history, we've picked "B". Communities—whether small bands of foragers, farming villagers, nomadic pastoralists, or industrial consumers—have *always* sought to alter their environment to satisfy human needs. Then in the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution rapidly increased our ability to reshape our environment. Since then, there have been networks of concerned people who want us to re-think how we interact with the environment. These networks launched a movement called *Environmentalism*.

Most human societies through history have connected with the environments where they lived, and many believed those environments were sacred (served a religious purpose). European forests, Indian rivers, Amazonian rainforests, and the Australian continent—all have been sacred places to people at different times. But as societies grew and developed new technologies, humans also needed to utilize the resources around them. So, these sacred places became resources. Their wood built homes and fed fires. Their flowing rivers became the water supply, power generator, and convenient waste disposal. Their metals were mined and smelted (extracting a metal from ore) to make tools and weapons. As technology advanced, so did our impact on the environment.

## Romanticism and the Industrial Revolution

Conservation and environmental practices go back many centuries in different societies, but the roots of the modern environmental movement can be traced back to Romanticism in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. Romanticism was an intellectual and artistic movement that changed how many people thought about nature. Among other things, two key characteristics were a strong sense of emotion, and an awe of nature. Romanticism rejected many Enlightenment ideas, including the notion that humanity could, and should, control natural forces.

These changes began during the Industrial Revolution, and that's no coincidence. Industrialization required humans to extract and use more resources. Steel mills needed coal and iron ore, electrical wire needed copper, textile factories needed cotton. Rubber, tin, silver, sugar, coffee, wheat, paper, oil… you name it, and it was grown, harvested, mined, processed and consumed to meet human demands. Often, resources were extracted with forced labor and colonial violence. For example, in the Belgian Congo in Africa, the Congolese were forced to harvest set amounts of rubber-bearing vines. If you fell behind, the boss cut off your hand—to "motivate" others. Between 1885 to 1908, an estimated ten to fifteen million Africans died to satisfy Belgium's demand for rubber. That's how colonizers treated the Congolese *humans* they encountered, so you can imagine what happened to the forests.

The benefits of the Industrial Revolution came at a staggering environmental cost, and not just in colonies that were stripped for raw materials. In England's cities, the skies turned black with smoke, and the rivers stank with pollution. Life expectancy dropped from around age 40 in 1700 to about 30 amongst the urban poor by 1850.

Romantic art inspired people to compare the usually dirty and unpleasant conditions of urban factory life with an idealized vision of nature. As people saw once vast forests disappearing and clean air and water turned foul, they now wanted to protect and preserve these valuable resources. In the cities, a growing Socialist movement sought to improve the filthy living and working conditions of workers. The middle-class—gaining in numbers and influence—formed conservation groups all over the country, each targeting a particular cause. Before long, this loose network of activists began lobbying Parliament to legislate environmental protections, both in the countryside and cities. Through these efforts, things began to slowly change.

## The environmental movement in the United States

Similarly, conservation groups formed in the United States during the nineteenth century. A young Scottish immigrant, John Muir, played a central role in starting the American environmental movement. In 1867, he walked 1,000 miles/1,600 km from the state of Kentucky to Florida and wrote of his experience in "A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf." Then he travelled to the West Coast, and promoted the preservation of Yosemite Valley in California. In 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park, when the very idea of a "national park" was a first for the United States and really for the world. This led to the creation of the National Park Service in 1916.

Muir's attitude points out an interesting convergence of common interests and a divergence of ideology. Gifford Pinchot was a friend and ally of Muir who also wanted to help protect the nation's forests. But the two had a falling out over how to reach that goal. Muir was a preservationist, wanting the federal government to protect the nation's wild areas from the effects of human development. Pinchot was a conservationist, who also wanted the government to protect these areas, but still allow "mixed-use" of the land, like cattle grazing, or the selective cutting of timber. Pinchot was better able to put his ideas into practice after he was appointed the first head of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905. This Muir-Pinchot argument is a philosophical clash that continues today in land management.

Several decades after Muir's early efforts, the 1960's saw the rise of a new American environmental movement. Rachel Carson sounded the alarm with her book *Silent Spring* in which she warned of the dangers of DDT (pesticide) use and the effects it was having on bird populations. Other writers, scientists, and activists soon joined Carson and the new environmentalist movement.

American environmentalism started with individuals like Muir and Carson, whose efforts convinced governments and politicians to take action. In 1970, politicians and activists organized the first Earth Day, which has since become a global awareness-raising celebration. In 1972, the United States established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which was instrumental in improving air and water quality in the United States. But since its creation, the EPA has been the subject of debate. The same tension that divided Muir and Pinchot still exists today. The desire to protect the environment clashes with the desire to extract value and resources.

Whether to protect business or to protect the environment has become a balancing act that is especially relevant today. Short-term economic interests compete against overwhelming scientific evidence that human industry is responsible for warming the Earth. This has potentially catastrophic consequences, including rising sea levels and extreme weather.

## The international environmental movement

American and British environmentalists played a large role in establishing the networks on which the movement was built, but the environmental movement has not been confined to Western industrial nations.

In 1973, for example, women in northern India took non-violent action to protest government policies that awarded large logging contracts to companies. Large-scale logging in India had resulted in deforestation that deprived the locals of cooking fuel (wood), livestock, and water. Known as the Chipko movement, activists argued that their government's logging policies were similar to colonial policies when India had been ruled by the British Empire (up until just 26 years earlier). British companies and the colonial government had extracted resources for the benefit of others far away. Employing Gandhi's principle of *Satyagraha* (non-violent protest and civil disobedience) women and men hugged trees to prevent them being cut. Actually, that's where the movement got its name—Chipko (Hindi for "stick to") refers to the act of tree-hugging. The inspiring movement spread through India quickly after the women won the support of the local government. As the network of Indian environmentalists grew, the Chipko movement helped implement national environmental reforms and empowered women in the affected areas.

A similarly inspiring success occurred in Kenya in 1977, when activist Wangari Maathai created the Green Belt Movement. This was an indigenous, grass-roots organization designed to counter the effects of deforestation, such as soil erosion and loss of cooking fuel. Her movement has planted over 51 million trees. Over 30,000 women have been trained in sustainable practices that help provide an income as they work to restore the landscape. Maathai's efforts were recognized in 2004 as she became the first African woman to win the Nobel Prize.

Local communities have also led efforts to conserve rainforests in the Amazon River Basin in South America and in Southeast Asia. They find themselves facing corporations and farmers who want to expand cattle-raising (in the Amazon) and palm oil production (in Southeast Asia). Once again, these confrontations demonstrate the tension between environmental and business interests. In these cases, the local-led environmental movements have generally been losing ground over the past decades, despite assistance from global organizations. Southeast Asia has lost about a third of its rainforests in the past 50 years, and the Amazon has lost about 20% in the same period.

Other organizations have successfully tapped into networks of activists around the world. Perhaps the best known is Greenpeace. Founded in 1971, Greenpeace operates in over 50 countries. Although they are best known for their advocacy of the oceans and denuclearization (removal of nuclear weapons) they are active in a variety of other environmental and social justice causes.

## Conclusion

You may have heard the expression, "There is no such thing as a free lunch." The bio-ecologist, Barry Commoner used it as one of his Four Laws of Ecology.

A simple example: coal. It can be burned to produce electricity, and it just sits in the Earth, "free" for the taking. So, many countries take it, and burn it. This can also produce extensive air pollution, harmful to humans and ultimately contributing to the dangerous warming of the Earth. Sure, "scrubbers" can be put on smokestacks to filter out the black exhaust before it pollutes the air. But scrubbers cost money, so that either lowers company profits or raises the cost to consumers. And that's just one very basic example. Virtually every environmental protection comes up against these competing interests. Societies and communities are forced to put a price tag on these decisions. Put another way, if the scrubbers don't absorb the sooty particles billowing up those smokestacks, then it's trees, animals—and human lungs—that will.

The challenges of trying to balance environmental protection with economic growth remind us that "There is no such thing as a free lunch." The cost may be hidden, at first, but eventually someone will pay.

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# International Institutions

Eman M. Elshaikh

After World War II, many nations around the world thought, “Okay, enough is enough!” International institutions with long-term plans were created with the goal of making a healthier, fairer, more stable and peaceful world.

## Introduction

After the destruction of the Second World War and the hardships caused by the Great Depression (1929-1939), many nations of the world faced challenges. Leaders looked for solutions to global conflict, poverty, injustice and instability. Intergovernmental groups like the League of Nations (1920-1946) had tried and failed to promote peace and economic security. So, world leaders came together to think of a new approach.

Their ideas led to the creation of several new institutions. An institution is an organized social structure that tends to be complex and long-lasting. Institutions affect how communities are organized by influencing behavior, customs, and laws. In this case, leaders wanted to create institutions that would help communities or networks of people. These institutions would work toward particular social, political, or economic goals.

The new institutions formed at the end of the Second World War were political, economic, and even non- governmental. But as you'll see, the distinction between these isn't always very neat. As we discuss these world institutions, we'll consider how effective they were at influencing people's lives. How did the world change as a result of these new institutions?

## A world government? The development of political institutions

The League of Nations, formed in 1918, had been intended to prevent another world war. But in 1943, at the height of World War II, it had obviously failed. Global leaders knew they needed a new institution that could carry out similar goals but in a different way. So in 1945 they formed the United Nations (UN).

Headquartered in New York, the United Nations was designed to provide what the League of Nations had not: collective security. This basically means that all members (meaning nations, not individuals) have a duty to come together as an international community and resist aggression. Ideally, this means preventing aggression in the first place. But the United Nations does have some tools for dealing with aggression and conflict if they occur. One of these tools is the United Nation's judicial arm, which deals with legal issues. This judicial arm is called the International Court of Justice (ICJ) headquartered in the Hague, a city in the Netherlands. The Court's role is to resolve disputes between member states[[10]](#footnote-10) and to advise the United Nations' various agencies.

The United Nations has also created measures for protecting global health and human rights. Perhaps the best example of this is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It is a set of standards for human rights, the treatment of women and children, and labor. Another example was the UN's creation, in 1984, of a special agency called the World Health Organization (WHO). This agency's goal is to ensure public health globally.

So, the UN clearly serves many different functions, all aimed at a better, healthier, fairer, and more peaceful world. This has led some to describe the UN as a "world government" that controls an international community. But it functions quite differently from a government. The United Nations is not like a sovereign nation that can punish its citizens. Instead, it must influence its member states through treaties, monitoring, special procedures, and commissions.

These are definitely impressive aims, but has the United Nations met these goals? The language of rights that it sponsored has certainly been influential, shifting how people think about individuals, citizens, and states. Though the United Nations isn't always able to enforce humanitarian standards, these standards seem to have affected people's beliefs and behaviors.

Has the United Nations eliminated conflict and human rights abuses? Absolutely not. Over half a century after the United Nations was formed, there are still many violent conflicts and human rights abuses. But we have to look at the evidence and think about the scale of the conflicts. Does the evidence show an overall reduction of violence? Have human rights abuses increased or decreased over the decades? And for whom have these measures been most effective? To answer these questions, we can consider evidence like human rights reports, changes in population, and mortality rates. We know the shifts are occurring, but it's a lot trickier to figure out what's causing them.

## Globalizing trade: the economic institutions

The simple fact that the United Nation was formed shows that countries were really concerned about reducing violent conflict after the end of World War II. But the violence of war wasn't the only concern. Many leaders were also worried about economic instability and poverty. After the Great Depression, most world economies were still struggling. Even before the war ended in 1944, some leaders met in the United States to address this problem. Their goal was to think of policies for regulating the global economy. They wanted to prevent the ups and downs of the interwar period and ensure stable currencies.

Out of these discussions, two crucial institutions were formed. The first was the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The second was the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which later became the World Bank. The original goals of these institutions were to help control the destructive ups and downs of global markets. They were created to ensure that the world economy was growing in a balanced way.

The original goals of the IMF and the World Bank were protecting employment and standards of living. They also wanted to make sure trade was balanced and not dominated by specific countries. Both institutions therefore invested in helping member countries develop their resources and productive powers. The IMF's written mission reflected this, with its emphasis on international cooperation, balanced growth of international trade, and stability. Its initial goals were largely focused on regulation. The World Bank had a slightly different focus: reconstruction and development.

Working together, the idea was that they would help member states share risk, resources, and information. This was meant to be non-political. Each state's voting power was aligned to its economic contribution. This non- political style was important, because member states wanted to avoid the nationalist policies that had made the Great Depression so devastating. Instead, these institutions worked by creating more cooperation. The IMF, for example, gave loans to developing countries to cover trade deficits (shortages). The World Bank made massive investments in the form of debt relief and reconstruction projects, particularly in Europe.

Those were the original goals of these two organizations. But over time, this changed. The goal became opening up markets around the world, which is called economic liberalization. The idea is that markets would be less regulated, allowing networks of exchange to operate more freely. The international institution that most pushed for economic liberalization is the World Trade Organization (WTO), which was founded in 1995.

How did these institutions change the world? Over several decades, the global markets did in fact become increasingly connected into broad networks. This allowed money and investment to move a lot more easily. These institutions also played crucial roles in managing financial crises and economic transitions. For example, they encouraged centrally-planned economies from the former Soviet Union to move toward open markets.

## Non-Governmental Institutions

Another type of institution that attempts to make change at the global level are international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). From as early as the nineteenth century, organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross and Oxfam International have worked to tackle global health problems and poverty. More recently, human rights advocacy organizations, like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have had a major effect on how people understand their role in the world. These organizations have allowed many more people see themselves as global citizens participating in an international community. Environmental activist organizations like Greenpeace have had a similar effect. That's because these groups have increasingly used media campaigns to raise awareness. These campaigns promote a feeling of global responsibility.

This belief in the importance of common action highlights the ways these institutions shape people's communities. When you think about it, this is a powerful—and effective—belief. INGOs[[11]](#footnote-11) like Amnesty International have been effective by building upon the United Nations' human rights efforts. They've called attention to abuses and pushed for violent acts like rape to be defined as war crimes. They also helped mobilize world opinion against things like nuclear testing and the racist system of Apartheid in South Africa.

How did they accomplish this? By changing world opinion. And that's no small thing. It creates a powerful feeling of connectedness and shared responsibility. It's so powerful that American President Dwight Eisenhower once said, when asked to continue nuclear testing, "the new thermo-nuclear weapons are tremendously powerful; however, they are not… as powerful as is world opinion today in obliging the United States to follow certain lines of policy."

## Some conclusions

The world is now connected in unprecedented ways because of international political and economic institutions and global NGOs. They've created broader, more fluid networks. And they've also created greater, more encompassing senses of community.

But these connections have not always been even. The effects have been partial, inconsistent, short-lived, or even negative in some cases. They haven't always managed to prevent crises. Many people get left behind. Also, in pushing economic liberalization, these institutions have resulted in fewer social protections. In many cases, in order to receive debt relief, loans, or other investment, countries have been forced to reduce social protections like healthcare. Collectively, these changes have created more uniformity on a global scale—for better or for worse.

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# Rise of China

Eman M. Elshaikh

Since World War II, China's economy has grown massively. Economic growth took off in the 1980s, and today China is a powerful global economic center.

## Introduction

A Napoleon Bonaparte quote has been popping up in a strange place over the last two decades: in the financial columns. As economists have tracked China's exponential economic growth, they have cited Napoleon's alleged prediction, "Let China sleep; when she wakes she will shake the world." Regardless of whether or not Napoleon actually *did* say this and what he meant by it, China is definitely awake! And it is radically transforming the world economy. Since 1980, China's economy has grown faster than any other in the world.

But was China ever sleeping? And what woke it up? It's difficult to say. Historians and economists have many different answers to these questions. Compared to Europe and the United States, which were rapidly developing in the nineteenth century, China's economy did seem to be pretty sleepy for a few centuries. But the reasons for this are complicated—and we won't really address them here. But we *will* talk about China's economic development in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Though it experienced some growth during the era of the Communist leader Mao Zedong (1949-1976), China's economy really flourished in the decades after Mao's death. Why? Historians and economists cite many different reasons, but there are a couple of common ones. First, the state of China became decentralized. Second, the economy became increasingly privatized. Others point to various cultural factors. These include things like the "Confucian ethic" and even capitalist incentives. Taking a peek into the history of China's economy since WWII might help us make sense of these changes.

## China after World War II

In the mid-twentieth century, the Communist Party of China won a brutal civil war. There began a new era of communist leadership under Mao Zedong. The country's leaders set about modernizing and industrializing China. But this modernity had to have a communist flavor, as opposed to capitalist values.

This took the shape of rural land reform, collectivizing agriculture, and investments in urban industries. Land and resources were totally redistributed. By mid- century, some of these efforts had improved the standard of living for the average Chinese person. Poverty declined, literacy rates rose, and educational opportunities increased. However, Mao was not satisfied with the pace or distribution of progress. Growth was still moderate, and it was very uneven. While cities grew and gained wealth, rural areas simply did not keep up.

In the late 1950s, Mao introduced a campaign called The Great Leap Forward. A major goal of this effort was industrializing the countryside. This called for small- scale industry in the countryside, more widely available education, and the use of "people's communes."

The Great Leap Forward had some successful aspects. Vital infrastructure such as railroads, bridges, canals, reservoirs, mines, power stations, and irrigation systems were improved. But ultimately, this plan was a failure. In the rush to industrialize, communist leaders promoted projects that sometimes had greater costs than benefits. Combined with bad weather, these problems resulted in a devastating famine. In the early 1960s, about twenty million people died.

In the mid-1960s, Mao introduced yet another campaign. It was called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Mao believed that the stagnating economy was partly because of capitalist values in the Communist Party. The solution, for Mao, was to set about transforming the very cultural fabric of the country. He wanted to revolutionize the way people related to one another and to the state. In the late 1960s, the Red Guard, a militarized social movement made up mostly of young men, were mobilized to destroy the "Four Olds" of pre-communist China: Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas. As a result, many of China's historical heritage was destroyed, as it was seen as representing capitalist, feudal, or backwards ways of thinking.

This had negative effects on religious communities and ethnic minorities. Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim heritage and communities often came under attack. They were seen as either old or foreign. Christian convents, Buddhist monasteries, Muslim mosques, and cemeteries for foreign people were destroyed. In some cases worshippers were killed. Ethnic minorities, including Mongolians, Uyghurs, Hui, Koreans, and Tibetans, were often persecuted or killed.

## Changing directions

The Cultural Revolution had loudly asserted Mao's radical vision of communism. It also strongly rejected capitalist values. But in the decades after Mao's death, China moved in the opposite direction. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping during the 1980s, China underwent massive economic reforms. The Chinese economy became less centrally planned. It evolved into what Deng Xiaoping described in a 1984 speech as "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

Like Mao, Deng Xiaoping wanted to increase production and modernize the country. But he did not reject the West. Deng Xiaoping's approach to developing production was a lot more open to foreign influences. This meant that capitalist approaches also increasingly influenced the Chinese economy. Many Mao-era reforms were dismantled. Agriculture and industry were privatized in many sectors. Special Economic Zones, mostly on the coasts, attracted foreign investment by offering tax breaks. These included inexpensive labor and other incentives. Tourism also increased. Some restrictions on religious activity were relaxed, and places of worship reopened.

Deng Xiaoping's stated goal was to drastically improve the standard of living by the end of the century. Though he retired in 1989, his goal was ultimately accomplished. After the Maoist era, China was politically stable, and the economy took off. Poverty declined, and the average Chinese person was healthier, with better overall nutrition, a higher life expectancy, and a lower incidence of disease. Urban centers were energized, with exports booming. While these policies looked more capitalist, Deng Xiaoping explained that it didn't matter if things appeared more communist or capitalist. What mattered was what was good for China.

## China and the global economy

It seems like half of all the goods we use (if not more) are labeled "Made in China," but this wasn't always the case. Before the economic reforms from the mid-1970s, China exported far fewer products globally. As these reforms took effect, China played a new role in the global economy. By the early 2000s, China had become the largest supplier of clothing, shoes, computer components, and seafood. By 2010, China was the world's second largest economy. In 2011, it became the world's largest manufacturer.

This economic integration meant greater political integration. China increasingly had better diplomatic relations with Western countries. It also established important connections with other regions, most notably Africa. Chinese corporations play a huge role in Africa. There both the Chinese government and private companies invest massively in infrastructure, energy, and banking. The goal has been to invest in Africa by supporting building projects through low-interest loans. This is part of China's Road and Belt Initiative to increase trade. Some of this investment has paid off. Both African nations and China have reaped the rewards of increased trade and the creation of more jobs. Other projects, however, have not been as successful. If the project fails then it is the African nation left on the hook to pay back these Chinese-backed loans. Critics have stated that China's involvement in these projects is just a new form of imperialism. Supporters argue that China's investments have given African nations an economic boost.

China is also connected to vibrant networks in East and Southeast Asia and beyond. In the 1990s, China joined the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank. These new connections pushed Chinese policies even further toward open markets. In 2001, China joined the World Trade Organization. After China entered these international networks, they began to replace Japan as the leading producer and distributor of goods around the world.

This might all seem very positive, but it definitely brings new challenges. China experiences major problems like urban overcrowding, crime, regional disparities, and environmental degradation. As a result of privatization, social and economic inequality have also increased. Wealth has become more concentrated. Corruption among officials and elite families continues to be a concern. The downsizing of the state sector and the military meant that many lost their jobs. This contributed to massive internal migration. Over a hundred million Chinese are now migrant laborers, either abroad or in China.

So how do we understand these economic transformations? It's clear that economic liberalization played a huge role, for better or for worse. Some might see this as China "waking up" and "re-emerging,". But it's more accurate to describe this as a different path toward industrialization. Many scholars present this in terms of a great "divergence" between the East and West. After an earlier "rise of the West," was China's rapid growth part of the "rise of the East"? Indeed, in the past few decades, East Asia's share of world production has increased, while American and European shares have decreased. We can speculate about what this means, but the truth is that there aren't quick and easy answers. This is still a very hot debate, and we have to consider mounds of evidence to answer this question. What's definitely clear is that China is now more than ever a powerful global center, and it will likely continue to have a massive economic force in the future.

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# Goods Across the World

Bridgette Byrd O’Connor

Have you ever thought about how many different nations contribute to your morning cup of coffee? What global resources affect your ability to post photos to your preferred social media app? These everyday luxuries are fueled by increasing globalization.

## Introduction

How many different nations and workers does it take for you to buy a cup of coffee in the morning before school or for you to wake up for the school day to the sounds of the alarm on your phone? And do the companies that produce these products have high ethical and labor standards? In other words, are there hidden costs to having that cup of coffee or checking social media apps on your phone?

Thus far, you've learned about how the world has become more interconnected. Transportation, communication, and access to skilled labor have improved tremendously in this era. In addition, the ways in which goods are produced and distributed has changed dramatically. This includes everything from something as simple as a cup of coffee or as complex as your smartphone. There are now hundreds to thousands of people who are involved in the design, production, distribution, marketing, and support of the products you use and consume on a daily basis.

Asia is at the center of global production and distribution today. We've seen global trade routes and centers of production change over time. For example, during the early years of the Industrial Revolution, Britain and the North Atlantic zone were the main centers of manufacturing for the whole world. But since the late twentieth century, this role has shifted back to Asia. China, in particular, became a global player in the production and distribution of goods since 2005. Prior to 2005, Japan was the main organizer of trade in Asia. The late arrival of China as *the* global trading partner may seem strange. But a lot of their power and influence came with the changing nature of the Communist Party in China. The communists sought to maximize profits and establish a more efficient system of communication and transportation. India and China's citizens have benefited from the opening up of international trade markets. They have benefited from job growth that is directly related to export markets. More people may now be employed. But this does not necessarily mean that working conditions have improved or that wages have increased.

This shift in the production and distribution of goods has hurt some nations while benefitting others. Companies moved production to nations with cheaper labor and fewer rules and regulations. As a result, the United States has seen its manufacturing jobs, such as printing and textiles, fade away. Politicians tend to focus on these as negative results. But there has also been a corresponding increase in service industry jobs, such as health care, advertising, and hospitality (tourism industry). There have also been increases in the production of manufactured goods, mainly due to automation. This means that the American unemployment rate hasn't necessarily increased. New service industry jobs have been created to replace the manufacturing jobs that were lost. In contrast, China has a much lower share of service industry employment related to exports. The nations that now lead the world in terms of manufacturing for export markets are China, Japan, Mexico, and Korea while the United States has the highest percentage for the service industry sector followed by New Zealand, Australia, and Canada (Escaith, 173).

## Apple's iPhone

The Apple iPhone has been one of the most coveted (wanted) items in the past 10 years. Apple, an American company, has sold over 1 billion phones worldwide. Most iPhone owners use it on a daily basis. So, it makes sense to include the iPhone in our list of products to trace its production and distribution.

Apple makes most (about half) of its phones in Zhengzhou, China. But the components for the phone come from more than 700 different suppliers and about 30 different countries around the world. In addition to designing and marketing of the product, Apple also acts as the global supplier for its parts. Foxconn, a company based in Taiwan, owns and operates the Chinese manufacturing facility in Zhengzhou. The factory is located on 2.2 square miles and has a workforce of about 350,000 people. These workers are broken into day and night shifts. Most of these factory workers make about $300 a month. This can go up to $657 a month when overtime and years of service are factored in. This factory takes care of the final assembly, testing, and packaging of the product.

Judging from the low cost of labor, you may be wondering how much Apple makes in terms of profits on its iPhones. The company obviously makes a lot. Apple was the first company to be valued at over $1 trillion. But Apple's profit on its iPhones is probably far less than many believe. Apple doesn't release all of its iPhone cost data. But many journalists and bloggers have attempted to break down the costs. Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, has stated that he's never seen one cost analysis that came close to being right. And there's a good reason for this. There are a *ton* of costs that go into producing the iPhone. These costs include concept and design, buying the component parts and manufacturing and shipping. They also include marketing, taxes, customs, and policing suppliers. The list could go on and on. So why does Apple choose to make the vast majority of its products overseas?

*Forbes Magazine* recently published an article about how much it might cost Apple to make the iPhone in America. The cost was very high (about $30,000 to $100,000 per phone!). Tim Cook explains that one of the main reasons for this is that the United States' workforce does not have the necessary skills. For example, there are not enough workers in the United States experienced in precision tooling. Precision tooling usually requires working with an advanced toolmaker as an apprentice. It also requires mechanical engineering skills. China has focused on vocational schooling and apprenticeships to meet these manufacturing needs. But nations like the United States have shifted away from vocational training in favor of university degrees.

"There's a confusion about China…the popular conception is that companies come to China because of low labor costs… China stopped being the low labor-cost country many years ago and that is not the reason to come to China from a supply point of view…the reason is because of the skill…and the quantity of skill in one location…The products we do require really advanced tooling. And the precision that you have to have in tooling and working with the materials that we do are state-of-the-art. And the tooling skill is very deep here. In the U.S. you could have a meeting of tooling engineers and I'm not sure we could fill the room. In China you could fill multiple football fields" (Tim Cook, Apple CEO).

In response to this shift in manufacturing to China, Apple has established a Supplier Responsibility Program (SRP). The program is intended to make sure that all of its foreign suppliers are paying a living wage[[12]](#footnote-12). It also ensures working conditions meet Apple's standards. This includes caps on the number of hours worked per week and training that includes self-empowerment and well-being. Apple has created thousands of jobs in foreign countries. It has also boosted employment for U.S. workers in Apple retail stores and at their design base in California. Employment has also increased due to Apple's relationship with other companies, both in the U.S. and abroad, that produce the component parts for the iPhone. These component parts include chips, glass, switches, camera parts, processors, fingerprint sensors, and touchscreen controllers.

Apple has created programs such as its SRP to ensure that all of its workers and suppliers are treated well. But the company has come under fire for continued problems at some factories. They have also been criticized for problems at the mines that supply the necessary materials for their iPhones. Some of the minerals that are mined and used in the lithium-ion batteries in the iPhones are considered conflict minerals. This label means that the minerals are sourced in areas that are in the middle of civil wars. So, the funds used to purchase these minerals are often also funding the continued fighting.

Conflict minerals such as tin, tungsten, tantalum, and gold (3TGs) are mainly found in the eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This nation has had a troubled history. These troubles began in the mid-nineteenth century when European imperialists wanted access to its natural resources. They continued under a dictatorship established after the nation achieved independence in 1960. The DRC has also been involved in wars from 1996 to the present. These wars have led to the deaths and displacement of millions. The mines in the eastern provinces generate the most wealth for the nation. But they've also been a source of corruption, child labor, and labor violations for years. China is the largest importer of these raw materials. And many of these raw materials go into the creation of iPhones and other electronics.

Apple took the extraordinary steps of mapping all of its suppliers and mineral smelters. They then assessed those suppliers and smelters to make sure that they were living up to the SRP. These lists of suppliers and smelters can be found on the Apple website. Posting on the website was done to ensure transparency. Apple is also trying to buy the necessary minerals directly from the mines. This will help avoid paying middlemen for services. But it will also allow Apple to check that these mining companies are not employing child labor.

From start to finish, there are about 400 different steps to the production of the iPhone at its factory in China. The workers at the Zhengzhou plant have a staggering output. They produce about 500,000 phones per day (the equivalent of 350 phones per minute). The Chinese government has even built a customs facility next to the factory. This aids in the shipping process. After the phones clear Customs, they travel a short distance to the Zhengzhou airport. This airport recently expanded its operations as a direct result of the traffic related to the shipment of iPhones. Since the phones are small and lightweight, thousands can be packed into a 747 airplane. This means that they can move quickly around the world to consumers.

The building of the factory in Zhengzhou has completely changed the area. Just as during the Industrial Revolution, a city has formed around the factory. The city provides workers with accommodation and services. Therefore, it's not just the factory workers who depend on Apple and Foxconn for their livelihoods. The thousands of people who have moved to this area to provide necessary services such as rental units, food, gas, and health care to the workers also depend on Apple. In addition, many others around the world also depend on Apple. This includes people who work for the suppliers of raw materials, those involved in the shipping of the phones, and those who work in retail stores and at call centers.

## Starbucks coffee

It's not often that a brand is so well known to people all around the world that all it takes is one image to know the company. Some companies have achieved this level of success. Names that come to mind include McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Apple, Ikea, Samsung, Mercedes, and Starbucks. In fact, the Starbucks symbol and its coffee can be seen and purchased in 28,209 locations in 76 countries around the world. As Starbucks has grown in popularity over the past few decades, so too has the criticism of the company. Starbucks, much like the case study on Apple above shows, has responded to these criticisms. They've attempted to make sure that their coffee is ethically sourced, produced, and distributed to its thousands of stores and millions of customers around the world.

Starbucks has worked with coffee growers in Latin America, Asia, and Africa to ensure that the beans they purchase are ethically sourced. In fact, they announced last year that 99 percent of their coffee has met ethically sourced guidelines. The company is also working hard to reach the 100-percent goal. But how much does Starbucks know about the practices at local farms including those that coerce or force labor or employ children? In August 2018, a complaint was filed by the nongovernmental organization (NGO) Conectas Human Rights and the labor union ADERE MG. It was filed against six international companies including Starbucks, Illy, McDonald's, Nestlé, and Dunkin Donuts. The complaint stated labor violations occurred at Brazilian coffee farms in the Minas Gerais state. It alleges that some of the coffee growers in this region of Brazil have employed forced laborers and children on its farms. This region produces more than 50 percent of the country's coffee exports. The case is pending. But it highlights how difficult it is for large multinational companies to know fully about the labor and ethical practices of each small farm that does business with it.

There are also questions about how much of the coffee produced and distributed by Starbucks counts as being Fairtrade certified. Currently, all of Starbucks Espresso Roast coffee beans are Fairtrade. This means that all of the beans it uses to create custom beverages in its stores meet this standard. Their other brand, Pike Place Roast, is also 100 percent Fairtrade certified. But their many other coffees do not fall into this 100-percent range. As previously stated, 99 percent of their beans are ethically sourced. But not all are Fairtrade, which many consider to be the best certification. And this is where it gets confusing. There are many different accreditation organizations for coffee producers. They include Direct Trade, Utz, Rainforest Alliance, Proudly Made in Africa, and Organic Certified. Each of these organizations has different standards for achieving their accreditation. Some only require that coffee farmers be 30-percent compliant[[13]](#footnote-13). This 30 percent-compliant threshold means that some coffee farmers can use substandard environmental and labor practices.

However, Starbucks has created a number of initiatives to make sure it is committed to ethical sourcing and labor practices. It has also consistently been ranked as one of the most ethical companies both in coffee sourcing and as an employer. These initiatives include a Global Farmer Fund. The fund has invested $50 million to help coffee farmers. This includes supplying loans to over 2,000 women in Colombia to encourage more diversity in coffee farm ownership. The company also created a Supplier Diversity and Inclusion Program. This program fosters "business relationships with companies that are at least 51 percent owned and operated by a minority, woman, LGBTQ, veteran, person with a disability, or small business classified as HUB zone or 8(a)" (Starbucks). In 2018, a Starbucks store manager called the police on two African American men at one of its stores in Philadelphia while they were waiting for a business associate to arrive. After the incident, Starbucks famously closed down 8,000 of its stores in the United States to provide diversity training. The company isn't perfect, but it does strive to correct discriminatory practices. Supporters would argue that this was done as a result of Starbucks' commitment to diversity and inclusion. Critics counter that it was to prevent their brand and profits from taking a hit[[14]](#footnote-14).

Over the years, Starbucks has put its money and time behind programs that help both coffee farmers in other nations as well as its workers across the globe. It has achieved 100 percent pay equity for all genders and races, who perform similar work in their stores around the United States. They are also attempting to close gender pay gaps in all of their markets. They have hired 10,000 military veterans and spouses at their stores. They've also committed to adding another 15,000 veterans and spouses by 2025. In response to the United States' 2017 travel ban on refugees, the company plans to hire 10,000 refugees by 2022. The jobs will be at locations in the U.S., Europe, and Canada. All of these moves have been steps in the right direction in terms of trying to hire and support those who have been historically underserved.

When it comes to environmental issues, Starbucks has pledged to create more eco-friendly stores. These stores will operate on renewable energy. At the moment they have 1,400. Their goal is 10,000 "green" stores—by their definition. In addition, about 62 percent of its stores use renewable energy sources. They also have a goal of distributing 100 million trees to growers in Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador by the year 2025. The goal is to achieve sustainable farming practices. They have currently given 21 million trees. Starbucks has also attempted to increase the percentage of recyclable materials in their coffee cups. They have promoted recycling in their stores. But when you consider the amount of single-use coffee cups and straws that are used on a daily basis, the damage seems overwhelming. Critics have also called the company out for other products used in their stores. These products include non-organic milk products and non-GMO (genetically modified organisms) foods.

How much should a global company like Starbucks or Apple do to ensure that their products are environmentally friendly and ethical? Also, how much can they do without owning all of the means of production and distribution? These two companies charge the most for their products when compared to other providers of the same goods. However, people are still willing to pay the $4 to $5 for a cup of coffee and $800 to $1,100 for a phone. Until sales begin to drop, these companies will continue to produce these goods. But consumers can ultimately be the ones to demand the most change.

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# September 11, 2001

Bennett Sherry

The attacks on September 11, 2001 killed thousands. The aftermath of the attacks transformed global politics and launched a seemingly endless global war on terror.

## 8:46 am

Your teachers and parents undoubtedly all have a story about September 11, 2001. They probably remember where they were when they first saw an image of American Flight 11 or United Flight 175 striking the World Trade Center. For those who lived through the 9/11 attacks, the images remain a touchstone of our lives. But if you're an American high-school student today, the attacks of 9/11 probably happened before you were born. Your country has been at war your entire life.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, 19 men from the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda hijacked four passenger airplanes. They flew two of the planes into the World Trade Center towers in New York City and one into the Pentagon. A fourth plane heading to Washington, DC crashed in a Pennsylvanian field. The attackers killed 2,977 people.

This wasn't their first attack on the United States. During the 1990s, Al-Qaeda had launched other, smaller attacks on American military targets and embassies abroad. In 2001, Osama bin Laden—the Al-Qaeda leader who planned the attacks—was living in Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban. The Taliban are a conservative Islamist political and military group that ruled most of Afghanistan in 2001. Following 9/11, U.S. President George W. Bush demanded the Taliban surrender Osama bin Laden. When they refused, an American-led coalition invaded Afghanistan in October 2001, and US troops remain there today, in the spring of 2020.

The 9/11 attacks killed thousands. The wars and policies that followed reshaped American foreign and domestic policy and set in motion a global war on terror. Why? What caused these attacks?

## Why do they hate us?

These were the questions on the minds of millions of Americans in the fall of 2001: Why do *they* hate us? And who were "they"? In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, many Americans turned their attention to the most obvious difference between themselves and the attackers: religion. News reports were filled with terms like "Islamic extremism" and "Islamism." Many Americans knew little about Islam, the Muslim religion, let alone the radical forms of Islamist thought followed by a tiny fraction of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims. One of the best-selling world history textbooks in America during 1990s dealt with Islam in only one chapter, on the eleventh to thirteenth century conflicts known as the crusades. So, many American students had encountered Islam only as a religion that existed 500 years ago. After the attacks, sales of the Islamic holy book, the Quran, soared. It was easy, in a climate of fear and anger, to blame a whole religion for the attacks.

The idea that the attackers (and Muslims more generally) hated America because they hated Americans' "western-style" freedom was comforting to some people. It provided simple answers. The argument went something like this: "Islam does not share Western values. They hate us because we're a free society." But blaming an entire religion of 1.5 billion people for the events of 9/11—committed by a much smaller group of extremists—wasn't an accurate response. There are, and were in 2001, many American Muslims, including members of the armed forces, willing to put their lives on the line for the United States. Islam is a diverse religion encompassing many ideas, from secular to spiritual to deeply religious. Islamism—the notion that Islam should guide personal life and society at large—has many peaceful practitioners.

## Why do we hate them?

The oversimplified notion that 9/11 was a result of a war between Islam and the West had deep roots in American intellectual thought in 2001. In the 1990s, several scholars tried to explain how global politics would change in the new millennium. Political scientist Samuel Huntington wrote about "The Clash of Civilizations." He argued that "the great divisions among humankind and the dominating sources of conflict will be cultural." Huntington divided the world into civilizations guided by different ideologies. Now that the Cold War was over, Huntington believed that Western civilization must clash with Islamic civilization. In the months after the attacks of 9/11, Huntington's book joined the Quran on best-seller lists. It was very popular in the George W. Bush (2001-2009) White House.

As Americans began to recover from the shock of the 9/11 attacks, a disturbing trend emerged. According to the FBI, hate crimes against Muslims surged. On September 17, President Bush called Islam a religion of peace. But the day before, he had announced a global war on terror, calling it a "crusade." The crusades were a series of medieval wars, in which Christian European armies invaded Muslim states. Bush's word choice was significant because it framed the conflict in civilizational terms.

## New enemies and old conflicts

Unlike the "clash of civilizations" idea, more accurate explanations of what caused the 9/11 attacks acknowledge historical complexity. European colonialism in the Middle East during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries still influences politics in the region. Even after colonialism, many people in the Middle East saw interference from the United States and Soviet Union as a new kind of imperialism. The Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan in 1979 and fought a bloody guerilla war through most of the 1980s. The United States funded and armed the guerrillas, many of whom—including Osama bin Laden—would eventually join Al-Qaeda.

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the United States seemed on top of the world as the lone superpower. In 1991, the U.S. military led a large coalition, including many Islamic states, in a highly successful Gulf War campaign against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. But from bin Laden's perspective, the fall of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War provided very different lessons: Superpowers can fall. Bin Laden wanted the remaining superpower to fall as well. During the Gulf War, half a million international troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is the home of the holy city of Mecca, however. For a religious extremist like bin Laden, the presence of foreign troops in the land of Mecca was an insult to Islam. He began to hate both the United States and the Muslim leaders who were its allies in the Gulf War.

Bin Laden and his organization began targeting Americans with terror attacks soon after the Gulf War. These attacks were part of a wider strategy. They believed that by attacking America, they could provoke the U.S. government into a disproportionate response. This would turn public opinion in the Islamic world against the Americans. That in turn would lead to the downfall of the moderate and secular governments in the Islamic world, allowing bin Laden and his allies to create an extremist, religious state in the Middle East.

## Forever war

The United States did react to the events of 9/11, of course, but the results were not quite as bin Laden had imagined them. In October 2001, the American military and dozens of allies invaded Afghanistan. The coalition quickly defeated the Taliban in what the U.S. military codenamed "Operation Enduring Freedom." But this was a global war on terror, and for the Bush administration, the conflict was just beginning. The president placed terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda in an "Axis of Evil" that included unfriendly states like Saddam Hussein's Iraq. However, Iraq had not in fact been involved in the events of 9/11. By incorrectly connecting terrorism to Iraq, the government created justification for another war. President Bush made his views clear, saying: "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." The Americans and a smaller coalition of allies invaded Iraq in 2003 against the wishes of the United Nations, falsely claiming that Saddam Hussein was building weapons of mass destruction.

The invasion of Iraq was part of a campaign to combat terrorism by overthrowing unfriendly leaders and replacing them with American-installed democratic governments. But the results of this strategy were a disaster. Despite broad public support in the U.S. for the invasion of Iraq and the downfall of Saddam Hussein, the war dragged on. Iraq quickly plunged into civil war, and the American invasion increased recruitment for militant groups in the Middle East, as bin Laden had hoped. However, the US maintained the support of most of its Muslim allies in the region. American special forces killed Osama bin Laden in 2011, during President Obama's first term in office.

The killing of bin Laden did not end the global war on terror. By 2011, new threats and new leaders had sprung up around the region. The most infamous of these called itself the Islamic State (ISIS). In Afghanistan, the Taliban was overthrown in 2001, but in 2020, the United States is once again seeking negotiations with the Taliban to end the conflict.

## The cost

In the United States, two decades of war have transformed domestic life. Government measures like the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Department have increased government powers on the borders, in the airports, and in private life. The war in Afghanistan recently surpassed the Vietnam War as America's longest conflict. Funding these wars has changed the American economy. In the chart below you'll see that, in 2014, the U.S. government spent more money on their military than the next nine nations combined, adding to the national debt.

How do we calculate the cost of 9/11? Almost 3,000 people died in the attacks. Thousands of soldiers have died in wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Syria. But by far, the largest group of casualties have been civilians. Estimates differ, but we know hundreds of thousands of civilians have died in these wars. In the region more generally, bin Laden got what he wanted. A massive American military occupation of several Middle Eastern nations has generated hostility to American presence and destabilized several governments in the Middle East, doing lasting damage to America's influence around the world.

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# Movements to End Racial Injustice

Sharika D. Crawford

After Second World War, movements for civil rights and equality emerged. Despite some successes, racism and inequality were unresolved in the generations that followed.

## Introduction

After the Second World War, the calls to end racial inequality grew in many countries. Many in the Allied countries had linked the fight against Nazism to the fight against ideas of racial superiority. In the United States, Black Americans fought in the war to end fascism and its racist policies. As veterans, they returned home to join others in demanding what Black Americans had been fighting for since the end of slavery: full political rights. By the 1950s and 1960s, these actions to end racial discrimination became a mass movement known as the Civil Rights Movement. Mass movements soon emerged elsewhere to fight racial segregation and discrimination. Although mass movements successfully made racial segregation and discrimination unlawful in many countries, racism and racial inequality persists worldwide.

## The long Civil Rights Movement

Black Americans had long fought against racial injustice and pursued different approaches for their advancement. By the twentieth century, activists became increasingly attracted to internationalist movements. Some, like labor organizer A. Phillip Randolph, became socialists, while an even smaller number, like entertainer Paul Robeson, joined the communist party. Other Black American activists organized transnational black movements. During the 1940s, there were many important movements to combat racism in the U.S., but there was no unified strategy or approach. For example, W.E.B DuBois began the Pan-African Congress, and Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Both had similar goals, but ideologically, DuBois and Garvey were notoriously at odds with how to reach those goals.

The Second World War presented another opportunity to fight for racial justice. The widely circulated Black American newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier* launched a "Double V" campaign. That slogan promoted victory overseas *and* at home. The campaign publicized issues important to its Black American leadership. It boosted their ability to organize against the continuation of racially discriminatory laws. These early efforts helped lay the groundwork for the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

The Civil Rights Movement describes a diverse set of approaches used to achieve full political, social, and economic rights for Black Americans. Actions included the use of the legal system to fight discriminatory laws, which made sense. After all, racial segregation had been legal in the United States since the 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. However, in 1954, *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* argued that it was harmful to have racial segregation in public schools. This time, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed that having separate facilities was "inherently unequal". *Plessy v. Fergusson* was overturned.

Other activists used civil disobedience by actively disobeying laws as a way to enact change. This is exactly what happened in 1955 when Rosa Parks—after being told to give her seat to a white passenger and move toward the back of the section reserved for Black American riders on a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama—refused. Like organizer Ella Baker, Parks was one of the numerous Black women in the movement who took on informal and formal roles. Parks's civil disobedience led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which drew the young activist Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a principal organizer. The boycott lasted nearly a year and only ended when the Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation on public buses. In addition to lawsuits and boycotts, civil rights activists also organized peaceful rallies such as the 1963 March on Washington.

Together, these various approaches brought pressure on Congress to pass landmark legislation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made racial discrimination unlawful in education, employment, housing, and public facilities. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 removed barriers such as literacy and poll tests, which stopped Black American southerners from exercising their right to vote. Beyond these gains, Black American women in the Civil Rights Movement extended the fight to gender equality. By the 1970s, some of these women pushed onward to fight for racial *and* gender equality.

## Racial democracy challenged in Latin America

Although there was no legally sanctioned racial segregation in Latin America, racism and racial discrimination were widespread. Many Latin Americans drew inspiration from the legal victories won by American civil rights activists. In Brazil, Afro-Brazilians adopted a strong sense of racial identity, which often reflected a global sense of blackness. During the 1970s, Afro-Brazilians regularly wore an afro hairstyle, dressed in African attire, and attended parties playing soul music like James Brown's "Black and Proud." This outward embrace of a black identity was met with renewed efforts to end racially discriminatory policies.

In 1978, Brazilian activists formed the Black Unified Movement (or MNU, from *Movimento Negro Unificado*) to respond to the poverty and the violence affecting people of African ancestry. Their goals were ambitious. Since 1964, the Brazilian military had ruled the country with a repressive hand and banned the right to protest or organize. Military leaders considered groups like the MNU divisive and a threat to the country's image as a racial democracy without racial injustices. Yet in the face of such harsh repression, the MNU met and successfully lobbied for November 20 as a National Day of Consciousness. It also gained ancestral rights to the descendants of the *quilombo*, which were communities of enslaved people who had escaped.

As in the United States, these efforts spurred on Afro-Brazilian female activists who separated and formed new organizations devoted to ending both racism and sexism. By 1988, they had organized the First National Encounter of the Black Woman to attain national recognition as a distinct collective identity in the country: *a mulher negra* or "the Black woman".

Following the momentum of Black movements in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America, indigenous people also got organized. They were similarly motivated to end racially biased laws and assert both their cultural and political rights. By the 1980s, indigenous movements emerged in the region to end policies that had failed to protect their traditional languages and cultures. Some even fought against economic policies that harmed the environment or limited their economic opportunities. In 1986, Ecuador's fourteen indigenous ethnicities formed the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE). They, in turn, formed a political party to lobby for Ecuador's recognition as a multicultural state and preserve the cultural rights of indigenous peoples. In Guatemala, indigenous communities openly protested against racial stereotyping and discrimination. Like CONAIE, the Guatemalan Maya peoples formed a unified political and cultural movement to create laws promoting the Maya language and cultural traditions. Unlike indigenous communities in Ecuador, the Maya faced insecurity as the government waged an ongoing civil war against them.

The plight of the Maya and the civil war gained international attention in 1992 when Maya activist Rigoberta Menchú received the Nobel Peace Prize. Menchú became the second Guatemalan awarded a Nobel Prize. She introduced readers to the hardships of the indigenous communities in her memoir *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.[[15]](#footnote-15) Despite the growth of indigenous activism in Guatemala, the 1999 legislature still refused to grant cultural and political rights to the Maya peoples.

## Conclusion

By the late twentieth century, people worldwide began to organize around issues of racial justice. Through the civic and political movements in the United States and Latin America, governments made racial discrimination unlawful. Yet racism and racial violence persists as a powerful force shaping the lives of many people across the globe. In response, people are once again organizing to end not just racial discrimination, but also racial violence. This is seen from the United States to Brazil. In 2013, young activists formed the Black Lives Matter movement to denounce the alarming number of police shootings of unarmed Black Americans. Creating new communication networks using social media, Black Lives Matter launched a national and now global movement against state-centered violence toward Black communities.

These issues are not unique to the United States. In Latin America, Black, and indigenous activists are the victims of violence due to their activism around issues of racial justice. Since 2015, over one hundred Afro-Colombian activists have been killed because of their work to protect ancestral land rights given to Black communities of the Pacific coast of the country. In 2018, the beloved Rio de Janeiro councilwoman and Afro-Brazilian organizer Marielle Franco was viciously gun downed. These tragic deaths are a terrible reminder that there is still much to do to attain racial equality and justice for all.

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# Our Networks Today

Andalusia Knoll Soloff and Trevor R. Getz

Do the internet and social networks help bring a global population closer together? Do they promote a better life for people? How have YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter altered our reality?

## Introduction

One of the things that makes us human is *collective learning*—our ability to share knowledge and pass it down across generations. The networks of knowledge we have built have expanded across human history, though at varying speeds and not without a few backward steps. In 1969, the size and speed of these networks took a giant leap when researchers connected a few universities in a digital network called ARPANET, the precursor of the internet. At first available only to a few scientists, today over half the world's population is online. Once requiring complex code, today the internet's search engines and social networking applications allow anyone with a smartphone or other computing device to join in the conversation. But is this maximized connectivity good or bad? And since it's half the world population and not all, what happens to the people who are left out, offline?

## “You” on social media

Your phone alarm tries to wake you. You snooze it. Minutes later it's back, so you shut it off and, since the device is still in hand, you check your Instagram. How many likes did you get while you were sleeping? How many people looked at your story? Did anyone message you? Next, you check your Snapchat, Tiktok, Facebook, iMessage, Whatsapp, Twitter, and whatever new social network everyone just started using.

You're not alone, even if no one else is in the room with you. All across the globe millions of people are doing the exact same thing, checking out the latest cute cat video, funny meme, makeup tutorial or political diatribe.

Social networks as we know them today have been around for less than twenty years but for many people it's hard to remember a world when they didn't exist. When you arrive at someone's house, do you ring the doorbell, or do you send a message that says "here"? Have you ever gone to the post office to send a letter to a friend or a postcard home while you are traveling? Do you get your music from a compact disc or just search for it on YouTube or Spotify? Ask your parents or guardians how they would have answered these questions twenty years ago.

## Social media: connecting people around the world

Social media and the internet unquestionably have an incredible power to connect people around the world. Take music, for example. In 2012, the song "Gangnam Style" by the Korean Rapper, Psy, went viral. It's catchy chorus and bizarre horse-riding dancing got people across the globe to sing and dance along, shamelessly. "Gangnam Style" became the first video to reach one billion views on YouTube. Internet-based applications like YouTube have caused our musical tastes to become increasingly synchronized worldwide. In 2018, the magazine *The Pudding* produced an infographic, musical map called Empire Records, analyzing the top YouTube songs in 3000 locations. It revealed that a large portion of the world listened to the same exact song and many to the same genre of music.

Technology has also allowed musicians at opposite ends of the globe to collaborate by both sharing and remixing their traditional culture. In 2014 the French-Chilean rapper Ana Tijoux released her song "Somos Sur," (We are the South) which also featured British-Palestinian rapper Shadia Mansour, connecting resistance movements, beats, and dance moves in the global south.

Social media also allows us to connect in geographically scattered "virtual" communities. For example, Facebook, launched in 2004, is even more popular than YouTube. High school reunions, concerts, baby showers and even block parties are all organized using Facebook Events. People commonly posts "selfies"—a word that didn't exist before Facebook—showing themselves at their best moments. Companies promote their products and some teachers even share their homework assignments via Facebook groups. Families whose members have migrated to different countries across the globe video chat via Facebook Messenger, perhaps showing newborns to their grandparents for the first time.

Social media apps like Snapchat and Instagram keep us connected to each other visually. Images, videos, and stories posted on these apps allow millions of users across the globe to see the daily lives of all users with public profiles, and to respond to them with direct messages or with emoticons expressing approval or disapproval. Online dating apps have largely replaced traditional ways of meeting potential partners in many parts of the world.

## Organizing through social media

These new networks based on social media are great examples of collective learning in the modern age. Hashtags allow users to view posts of people with similar interests, whether skateboarding, photojournalism, comic books or martial arts. They have also been used to coordinate and organize movements, often outside of big institutions like governments. In what became known as the Arab Spring in 2010, opposition movements grew in the Middle East as a result of protestors coordinating actions over Twitter and Facebook. During uprisings like those in Chile and Hong Kong in 2019, users increasingly uploaded videos to Instagram and Snapchat, showing themselves out in the streets expressing their discontent with their government.

Twitter has been an essential tool within the United States for social movements who use hashtags (#) to mobilize people around a certain cause. In 2013, following the killing of an African American teenager named Trayvon Martin, and the acquittal of the man who killed him, a group of community organizers in Florida launched the hashtag BlackLivesMatter. The hashtag became a movement, well beyond the phone screen and united people who wanted to fight the systemic racism that continues to harm black people. Another example is the MeToo movement focused on helping survivors of sexual violence. Twitter has allowed people who were previously marginalized from mass media to elevate their voices, to engage in important conversations, and to advance policy for the first time.

## Social media clearly has a dark side

However, these benefits of social media are not available to all. This is a result of the “digital divide”—the fact that a technology that is "cheap" in one part can be unaffordable by most in another. Almost half the world's population doesn't even have access. Among those who have access, some people—mostly the wealthy or those living in wealthy countries—get better service and have a greater ability to post and consume material.

Social media also can be used to divide us with messages of hatred or discrimination. Here's just one example: In Sri Lanka in 2018, tensions between two ethnic groups—Muslims and Sinhalese Buddhists—grew much worse as Facebook users fanned the flames of hate. A man uploaded a video in Sinhalese telling a false story that a Muslim restaurant had planted sterilization pills in its food as a plot to prevent the Sinhalese population from expanding. The video went viral and an angry mob of people attacked and burned down the restaurant. Messages calling for the murder of Muslim people started circulating on Facebook. In the following weeks people were burned and beaten to death and investigations reveal that violent messages shared on Facebook most certainly played a role.

In addition, social media can be used to repress as well as liberate. Just as people can use social media apps like Twitter to organize against authoritarian governments, those governments can use them to confuse or suppress protests. In fact, through social media our personal data is available to just about anyone who can pay for it. In 2017, for example, Facebook came under increased scrutiny in the United States when it was revealed that the political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica had inappropriately harvested data from 87 million Facebook users and used the information to influence presidential elections. These "social" campaigns were cleverly crafted and aimed divisive messages at people who were likely to believe them, even when they were false. Today, a great deal of false information is available via social media using the internet, and much of it was created with an intention to divide us from each other.

## A world together, or worlds apart?

Social media divides us in other ways as well. Social networks increasingly bring people's private lives into public view. Selfies have become one of the most important forms of expression for young people, controlling teenagers' self-esteem based on how many likes their photos get. Kyla Fox, a clinical therapist who analyzes the impact of selfie culture, put it like this: "If you put out an artificial sense of yourself, that makes it really challenging when you go out into the world and you have to be you—just you."

Beyond self-esteem, social networks can easily make us lonelier, as people retreat into their phones, limiting their social interaction to apps at the expense of meeting friends "irl"[[16]](#footnote-16). As more people gain internet access, those who think about the public good ask whether social networks will lead to less social interaction in real life. They also ask whether social media will unite us or instead divide us into groups with less contact and increasingly polarized views of each other. What is the future of collective learning? Maybe you can play a role in answering that question.

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# WTO Resistance

Bridgette Byrd O’Connor

Thousands descended on Seattle, Washington in November 1999 to protest the pro-globalization goals of World Trade Organization. What's wrong with globalization? It depends on whom you ask.

## Background

In late November and early December of 1999, thousands converged on downtown Seattle, Washington. The city was flooded with people from different parts of the world, and with different points of view, about the World Trade Organization (WTO). One thing most agreed on was that it was time to challenge the effects of increased globalization, in particular increased global trade. The occasion was the WTO's Ministerial[[17]](#footnote-17) Conference. Some were there simply to attend it, and others came to protest various aspects of the organization and its policies. On the protest side, most were peaceful demonstrators who took to the streets to express their concern that increasing global trade would hurt labor unions, the environment, and developing nations.[[18]](#footnote-18) Many held signs that criticized the WTO, and some dressed as sea turtles as a way to call out the impact globalization has on the environment. Lastly, there were others in this large group of people who used more disruptive techniques such as vandalism to criticize multinational corporations. Denis Cooper, a participant in these protests, described how many people felt: "I really realized how connecting it was when I saw all those people…I mean, before, and I want to say before it turned violent, it was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen in my life…we all, hundreds of thousands of people, banded together for this one issue. And we all held one thing in our hearts, and that was the WTO had to go. And then the next day when all those people got arrested and they had us in the jails, I really realized how many separate issues I was dealing with here."

You may remember from earlier readings that the WTO is a primary institution of international trade and economic globalization. According to the WTO website, "The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments. The goal is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible." All of that sounds pretty reasonable, so why would so many groups be against it?

In order to fully answer this question, we have to think about the perspectives of the different people protesting the WTO. They were a loose alliance of numerous groups, many with competing strategies and ideologies. Some were nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—non-profit, voluntary citizens' groups—who wanted the WTO to institute labor and environmental regulations and fair trade practices. Others wanted to do away with the WTO altogether. In contrast, a number of developing countries expressed anti-imperial and even nationalistic sentiments to criticize the WTO. On the fringes, there were anarchists who had a mix of goals. But they mainly wanted to destroy what they called neo-liberal ideologies and increasing globalization. So how did all of these varied, somewhat conflicting interests come together over a few days in Seattle to disrupt the WTO meeting that was being held there?

## Organizers, participants, and protesters

The WTO Ministerial Conference planned to meet in November 1999 in Seattle to fulfill part of the WTO goals of regular meetings regarding global trade negotiations. It was the third meeting of its kind since the formation of the WTO in 1995. The organization's main goal was to get rid of obstacles that limited free trade in a capitalist world economy. Environmental regulations and workers' rights were considered obstacles. Also, tariffs were targeted as a hindrance to free trade, even though some countries felt tariffs were needed to protect their economies from having to compete with goods imported from other countries.

The WTO was trying to resolve a number of disputes that had been brewing. Member nations were called upon to submit proposals on various topics including agriculture, labor, and environmental issues. The organization also asked for input from developing countries to understand the impact of global free trade practices on these nations. Over 200 proposals were submitted to the WTO and then compiled into a report. However, the WTO did not effectively address many of the concerns from all of the groups that submitted reports. From the perspective of developing countries as well as many of the nongovernmental organizations, it looked like the WTO wanted only to eliminate the obstacles to free trade, despite the consequences. These groups believed that the WTO wanted to end regulations, even if the regulations were intended to protect the environment, support workers' rights, or help developing nations compete in a global market. The protesters also felt that the WTO was favoring proposals for free trade submitted by industrialized nations such as the United States, the European Union, and Japan. The WTO was criticized for dismissing the concerns of nations that were not as industrialized or wealthy.

Outside of the inner workings of the WTO, both lobbyists and protesters wanted changes. Some were mainline NGOs such as the European American Business Council and the Fair Trade Center. In addition, there were labor unions like the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Environmental groups like the Sierra Club, and student groups that included United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) also weighed in. Among and between these groups were some protesters who embraced anarchist strategies. That is to say, they opposed large-scale organization and government in any form, and believed in bringing it down through confrontational and sometimes violent tactics. There were a wide range of groups overall, but all were either opposed to certain WTO policies or believed that the organization should be outright abolished.

## The protests

Therefore, a combination of disorganization and competing interests within the WTO as well as protests from outside the WTO led to two days of peaceful protests, violent clashes, and hundreds of arrests in Seattle from November 30 to December 1, 1999. The people trying to organize these diverse protest groups found it near impossible to address everyone's goals and desires. Some groups didn't want to march with others because their goals were too different. Other groups wanted to wreak havoc on the area through violent anti-globalization and anti-corporate protests. Most wanted to band together to form a collective voice that could express, non-violently, what they wanted from the WTO.

Organized protests have occurred throughout history. The Women's October March stood up against the king during the French Revolution; Gandhi organized protests against imperial governments in India. Many protested the Vietnam and Iraq wars, and we often see marches and protests to support the rights of women, LGBTQ+ people, and people of color. Also, this event in Seattle was by no means the first organized protest against a global organization. In the late 1980s there were organized protests in Berlin against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and another in Paris in 1989 against the backdrop of the G7 Summit.[[19]](#footnote-19) Protesters once again took to the street in Madrid in 1994 to demonstrate against the IMF and World Bank. Anti-globalization protests were organized on an international scale in June 1999. Known as the J8, protesters met in an array of cities including London, England; Eugene, Oregon; and Cologne, Germany to rally against the policies that were being discussed at the G8 Summit.

The Seattle protests, also known as N30 in reference to the date of November 30, were as diverse and complicated as other anti-globalization efforts, if not more so. Here is a summary of the various goals we've discussed, but bear in mind these were prioritized differently by different groups:

* Get multinational corporations and the WTO to help reform labor practices in developing nations.
* Protect the environment from the negative effects caused by global trade.
* Stop ignoring developing nations while favoring policies put forth by the U.S., the European Union, and Japan.

In many ways, the concerns of the protesters outside mirrored the discussions that were supposed to be happening inside at the WTO Ministerial Conference. Their goals—though also not universally agreed upon—could be summarized like this:

* Give developing nations a say in new trade regulations being proposed.
* Hear the concerns some nations have regarding environmental and labor issues.
* Reduce trade regulations and restrictions in order to increase the profits of international corporations.

While the protesters are referred to as anti-globalists, it's not like they want to shut down global trade and the movement of goods and people. Rather, they are usually concerned with corporate greed, fair labor practices, and environmental protection. Those who were advocating for an end to the WTO and promoting violence through anarchist tactics were often on the fringes of the protest groups. However, it was their actions that gained the most media attention. Many broke windows and vandalized property at businesses, generally global chains such as Starbucks and Nike.

In general, most protests seek to call attention to a problem by causing disruption, but not violence. Despite the violent acts at the N30 protest, things began peacefully. Thousands of people took to the streets to block entryways to the Washington State Convention Center, where the WTO Ministerial Conference was held. The idea was to prevent enough conference attendees from getting to the meetings to get the meeting canceled. They achieved this goal, but that other goal of a non-violent protest became harder to manage. The anarchists encouraged confrontational tactics and vandalism, and the police responded by launching tear gas and firing rubber bullets at *all* protesters, not just the violent ones. The Seattle Police seemed unprepared for the scale and size of the event. In the end the Seattle mayor had to declare martial law, call in the National Guard, and hundreds of protesters (both violent and peaceful) were arrested. Numerous people would later sue the city of Seattle for wrongful arrest and city officials were forced to pay over $200,000 to those who won their cases.

## Results?

The story of the Seattle protests was not exactly new, but it did seem to usher forth a new era in mass organization against economic globalization. The protesters also brought the issue to the attention of the media and generated publicity for their causes. New international networks were forged between protest groups that began to work together to achieve their goals of free and fair trade practices. There are continued organized protests at many of the meetings of the WTO, IMF, World Bank, and at government summits such as the G-7.

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# Transnationalism and the Revival of Nationalism

Andalusia Knoll Soloff and Trevor R. Getz

Is nationalism still relevant in the world today? Does it serve to unite or divide people? These are questions that are meaningful for many groups around the world.

## A world of nation-states

Since the eighteenth century, the rise of the nation-state has remained one of the big stories of our world's communities. In our increasingly globalized world, billions of people across the globe use the same social networks and listen to the same hit songs, wear the same style jeans and play the same videogames. Yet almost everybody is still a citizen of a nation-state, and national identity still draws people. In fact, it may be on the rise.

Just think about sports—it's an interesting way to observe nationalism and the role of the nation-state. The biggest sporting events in the world—the Olympics and the Football (Soccer) World Cup—pit the teams of the different nation-states against each other in pursuit of medals and national pride. Some scholars believe that sporting competitions like these demonstrate how important belonging to a group is for humans. If this kind of belonging is just part of being human, then national identities and nationalism may be here to stay.

However, sports also provide evidence that the concept of a nation-state is not so simple. For example, the United Nations recognizes 195 sovereign nation-states, and the FIFA World Cup only allows those 195 to show their flags, even though *211* teams can participate in the qualifying games. Some of these flag-free teams represent communities that aren't fully recognized nation-states, like Kosovo (claimed by Serbia) and Taiwan (claimed by China).

Then there is the Olympics. Since 1992, the Olympic committee has permitted stateless people to compete in the games representing the Olympic flag. When Brazil hosted the games, in 2016, the first ever Refugee Olympic Team competed. Composed of 10 athletes, they had fled war-torn countries including Syria and Democratic Republic of Congo.

What does it really mean to have a nation-state? Why are some countries only partially recognized? How do people support their nation-state by playing sports under their flag? These questions begin our investigation into the world's nations today.

## Transnationalism

After the extreme violence of the First and Second World Wars, nationalism was regarded by many as the mentality that led to so much fighting. The world-renowned Jewish scientist Albert Einstein who fled Aryan nationalism and the rise of Nazism in Germany said, "Nationalism is an infantile thing. It is the measles of mankind." After 1945, there was a growth in *internationalism*, the idea that the nation-states of the world must cooperate and work together in order to solve the world's most difficult problems. At the same time, economic globalization was becoming a powerful factor in the way people related to each other. With products made in one country sold in another, and the world's economies becoming increasingly interwoven, nationalism just seemed less important than it had before.

In recent years, some scholars of globalization have argued that we are in an era of "transnationalism." Just as economics has become global, transnationalism is the idea that identity is now a global idea as well. The internet and social media connect people across countries and allow them to maintain personal identities independent of their national identities. Another important example of transnationalism is the diaspora: groups of people, usually migrants, who share a culture but live in different places, all far from their homeland. Diasporas enable people to maintain cultural support structures that help them to adjust to new places and to pass on their cultures to their children.

The largest diaspora, by nation-state of origin, is from India. Almost 16 million Indians live abroad, and that's just counting recent migrants who still have Indian citizenship! They have relocated to many parts of the world, with the largest groups being in the Arabian peninsula (about 6 million across four countries), the United States (around 2 million) and Great Britain (almost a million). Millions more people of Indian descent have already become citizens in these and other places.

## The resurgence of nationalism

But not everybody thinks nationalism is a bad thing, or even that it is disappearing. For example, Gustavo de las Casas, a Foreign Relations scholar, believes that nationalism can be a good thing when it unites members of a nation-state to work together towards a common good—this, he points out, prevents government corruption which in turn promotes economic prosperity.

One place where nationalism is seen to promote a common good is Rwanda. Following the genocide that resulted from that nation's internal conflict in 1994, Rwanda's new government promoted an idea called *Ndi umunyarwanda*, or "everyone is Rwandan". This initiative was brought forth as an attempt to promote reconciliation between two communities—Hutu and Tutsi—and to help prevent a future genocide. As part of this program, the government has forbidden people to speak about their ethnic identity and has promoted a set of values that all Rwandans should share, at least according to the government. The program uses newspapers and radio to promote inclusive nationalism in schools and communities.

The *Ndi umunyarwanda* program has its critics, however. Some argue that it emphasizes obedience to the government and discourages open discussion of the violent and difficult past. They argue that the open debate is more important than the benefits of nationalism. Others believe that the program favors Tutsi over Hutu, despite claiming to be inclusive. Certainly, it demonstrates how difficult it is for anyone to balance individual, community, and national identity!

## Nationalism based on race rather than state

Some of the examples of rising nationalism around the world are ethnic nationalism—nationalism based on shared race or ethnicity, rather than on belonging to the same nation-state.[[20]](#footnote-20) The most prominent example, probably, is the resurgence of white nationalism.

From August 11th to 12th 2017, the city of Charlottesville, Virginia became a battleground between white supremacists who said they wanted to create a "homeland for white people" versus activists who defended racial diversity. During the rally, known as "Unite the Right," participants marched with Confederate flags as a reference to when slavery was legal, and carried tiki torches as a reference to the torches that the Ku Klux Klan used throughout history to wage terror on African American communities. At the height of the protests, a white supremacist supporter drove through the counter protesters, murdering civil rights activist Heather Heyer.

Ironically, modern white nationalism is deeply transnational.[[21]](#footnote-21) The movement was born on the internet, and has connected white nationalists across the globe. For example, many Charlottesville protestors took inspiration from the Golden Dawn Movement, a white supremacist political party in Greece that has grown in numbers. Other white supremacist parties in Europe include Germany's Alternative for Germany (AfD) and Austria's Freedom Party (FPO). One thing many of these groups share is resentment towards refugees and immigrants. In Europe, these are mainly refugees who fled Syria and war-torn African countries. In the United States, they are mostly migrants from Central America and Mexico.

## Citizens of no nation

One of the consequences of nationalism is that it often brings attention to people who live in a country but are not permitted to be citizens. Usually, these are people who are denied citizenship because they do not belong to the dominant ethnic group. Today there are more than 12 million people across the globe that are considered stateless, as they are not citizens of any country. How many is 12 million? Well, there are currently 78 countries that have fewer people than that as their total population, Greece and Austria among them.

Anyone born in the United States is automatically a citizen—it's a system called birthright citizenship. The Fourth Amendment of the US Constitution guarantees this right, but some leaders and members of the public have argued that it should be eliminated. Birthright citizenship occurs within only 39 other countries. In Europe and the majority of countries around the world, citizenship is only granted to newborns who have at least one parent who is a citizen of the country.

When a person is born in a country that will not give them citizenship, their access to basic rights is often lost. Without a nationality and a passport as proof, they face barriers including access to public education, medical care, the right to open a bank account, have a job, buy a house, or even get married. They also are denied freedom of movement because without a passport they can't travel out of the country where they were born.

In Europe, one of the groups that has been denied citizenship and basic rights are the Romani or Roma people, many of whom fled the Balkans in the 1990s during the nationalist war which pitted Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian people against each other.[[22]](#footnote-22) While many Roma people lost their documentation during the war, others never had citizenship. Due to structural racism, their children are unable to gain citizenship in any European state.

Sometimes, groups within a country actually have only limited citizenship rights. One of the clearest examples of limited citizenship is the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine. Palestinians who live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have Israeli passports but are not afforded the same rights as Israeli citizens and instead live under military occupation. A wall, a series of checkpoints, and segregated highways control their access to enter Israel or travel from one of the Palestinian territories to the other. In 2018, Israel passed a new law declaring the country the "nation-state for the Jewish people" in which "The exercise of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish People." This leaves the Palestinians, who have no state of their own, in a precarious position as outsiders in the country in which they live. Another group that thinks of itself as a people but has no state of its own is the Kurds, 35 million of whom live as minority populations divided among Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria.

## Further discussion

So what does the playing field look like now? Are we in an increasingly transnational world where our identities as members of a nation-state are becoming less important? Or have citizenship and "root-for-my-team-only" nationalism become more important than ever? What kind of world would you like to see? These are decisions that will likely shape your life experiences, and therefore they are worth thinking about.

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## Author Bios

Andalusia Knoll Soloff is a multimedia journalist based in Mexico City whose work has been published by *Al Jazeera,Teen Vogue, Democracy Now!, VICE News, BBC, NBC, The Intercept,* and *Latino USA*, among other outlets. Her reporting focuses on human resilience and dignity in the face of disappearances, state violence, land struggles and gender-based murders in Latin America. Andalusia is the author of the graphic novel *Alive You Took Them,* which is about the 43 missing Ayotzinapa students.

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# A Century of Refugees

Bennett Sherry

Over the course of the twentieth century, millions of people have been forced to flee their homes, becoming refugees. Meanwhile, governments around the world have increased their attempts to control and limit migration.

## Crisis for who?

In 2015, the news was filled with headlines about a European refugee crisis. The Syrian Civil War had displaced millions of people, and many of these refugees fled to Europe. With other refugees fleeing conflicts in North and East Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Columbia, and Southeast Asia, the world had more displaced people than at any point since the Second World War—over 65 million in 2015. Listening to Western news media, it sounded like all the refugees in the world were flooding into Europe. Charts and images, designed to raise fears of masses of refugees entering Europe, circulated through various news and social media outlets. This reinforced the idea that Europe was about to be overwhelmed. Soon, anti-migrant, anti-refugee, and anti-Muslim protests filled European streets.

But was this really a European crisis? Over a million migrants applied for asylum in Europe in 2015, up from 216,000 in 2014, mostly from Syria. While these are big numbers, very few of the world's refugees ever make it to Europe. Even during the "crisis" of 2015–2016, European nations accepted only a tiny fraction of the world's total. Since the Syrian Civil War started, Turkey has consistently hosted the most refugees—with 4 million in 2019. In 2016, ten countries hosted over half of the world's refugees. These ten countries were among the world's poorest—together accounting for only 2.5 percent of the global economy. Refugee migrations to wealthy countries draw the most media attention, but it is the poorest nations that carry the majority of the burden.

The European Union (EU) imposes strict border controls, shifting the burden of refugees to neighboring nations like Turkey. Syria's ongoing conflict has pushed millions of refugees to gather in Turkey as they seek a new home in Europe. Most do not make it. In 2016, the EU signed a deal with Turkey under which the Turkish government promised to prevent illegal refugee migration into the EU. In return, the EU agreed to pay Turkey €6 billion.[[23]](#footnote-23) How did this situation come to be? Why are there so many refugees in the world today? Why are so few of them in wealthy countries? Nationalism, decolonization, and economic liberalization all played a role. The story begins a century before the 2015 crisis, with the First World War.

## Nationalism, world wars, and decolonization

People have been fleeing conflict and persecution for millennia, but it wasn't until the early twentieth century that *refugee* emerged as an official category. For the first time, governments thought about refugees as a "problem" that needed a solution. Countries created international organizations in efforts to care for refugees and control migration. These efforts were in large part driven by changes in how governments thought about national borders. After the First World War, governments got really interested in regulating migration. Passports became more common, and new laws defined different types of migration.

Nationalism played a large role in creating stricter citizenship and migration laws. The First World War tore apart the Ottoman, Austrian, and Russian empires. The German and Chinese empires shrunk and were replaced by republics. As new nations rose from the ruins of old empires, nationalist leaders focused on building a common national identity. In addition to a common language and culture, many leaders also chose to focus on getting rid of people who, in their vision, did not qualify as citizens. For example, in the 1920s, Turkey expelled 1.5 million people they called "Greeks," and Greece kicked out 500,000 people they called "Turks." Their homes were taken away and they were forced from the nation where they had been for generations and moved to the nation where leaders said they "belonged."

The Second World War redrew borders and broke apart empires. For example, hundreds of thousands of European Jewish refugees fled persecution before and during the war. Many eventually made their way to the British Mandate of Palestine, where Jewish settlements had been established since the late nineteenth century. From 1947 to 1949, a conflict between Arab Palestinians and Jewish Palestinians led to the establishment of the state of Israel. This conflict displaced over 700,000 Arab Palestinian refugees from their homes.

Decolonization after the Second World War sparked massive refugee migrations. India won its independence from Britain in 1947. As part of independence, British India was divided into two independent nations: India and Pakistan.[[24]](#footnote-24) About 12 million people chose or were forced to leave their homes based on their religion. As Muslims in India were forced to relocate to Pakistan, and Hindus in Pakistan were forced to move to India, violence frequently broke out, killing hundreds of thousands. Decolonization conflicts in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Indonesia, and many other nations produced more refugees, as did the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Ethnic, religious, and political groups struggled for control of their new nations, and the winners expelled or killed their enemies.

## Why seek refuge?

By the 1960s, Western European nations had started to recover from the economic devastation of World War II, sparking a demand for cheap labor. Former colonies were left with more people than jobs, giving rise to the migrant worker. People from across Latin America, the Philippines, West Africa, and the Indian subcontinent all migrated to places like the United States, France, and Britain for work. The governments of wealthy nations encouraged labor migration because it was profitable. In the US, migrants from Mexico helped fill agricultural labor shortages. Turkish "guest workers" propelled West Germany's economic recovery in the 1960s.

Migrant workers moved because they wanted to make more money or build a better life. Others were pushed by major trends you may have already learned about. One cause was the violence that resulted from the Cold War or more recent conflicts. Many also suffered from what is often called *structural violence*—the long-term, cumulative effects of poverty, climate change, and ineffective government. Beneath all these motivations was the problem of inequality. That is, while people in some regions suffered, others enjoyed a far wealthier and healthier way of life that seemed to offer hope for better opportunities.

Many migrated legally, but many others moved through irregular channels to avoid legal restrictions. As migrant laborers undertook dangerous journeys across deserts and the Mediterranean Sea, their paths crossed with refugees fleeing their homes. In many cases, the line between labor migrants and refugees was blurred, giving rise to the category of *economic refugee*. In many cases, migrant workers and refugees ended up as indentured servants controlled by human traffickers while they paid back debts. As nations increasingly closed their borders and passed laws regulating migration, more and more migrants found themselves at the mercy of human traffickers.

## Building Fortress Europe

As the numbers of labor migrants and refugees increased in the 1980s and 1990s, Western European countries began to implement immigration policies, often described as "Fortress Europe." These policies opened borders between countries in the European Union, but placed restrictions on immigration from outside the EU, especially from countries in Africa and the Middle East. All around the world, national governments opened their borders to trade and investment. At the same time, they hardened their borders to migrants and refugees. In many cases—such as Mexican immigrants in the US and Muslim immigrants in France and Germany—labor migrants and refugees alike became less welcome.

## The century of the refugee?

The twentieth century has been called "the century of the refugee." But 20 years into the twenty-first century, it's apparent that migration—of political refugees, economic migrants, environmental refugees, and many others—will remain a feature of life on Earth. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in 2019, there were 70.8 million displaced people in the world. That's larger than the populations of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, combined. Many refugee camps, once intended as temporary havens, have become sprawling cities with their own economies. The United Nations created the UNHCR in 1950. They believed it would be a temporary agency that could "solve the problem of the refugee" within a few years. It started with an annual budget of $300,000 and a staff of 34. In 2019, the agency had a budget of $8.6 billion and employed 16,803 staffers in 134 countries. Refugee migration is not a temporary problem.

While the global number of refugees and displaced people has increased, asylum applications in Europe have returned to pre-2015 levels. The crisis depicted in those dramatic charts and pictures appears to be over. But European countries have not relaxed the restrictions they put in place in 2015. Governments continue to embrace economic globalization while closing their borders to migrants. Each year, thousands of refugees die on boats crossing the Mediterranean. Many of them drown in sight of EU ships.

Migrants have increasingly been treated as political pawns. Citizens of wealthy nations are happy to welcome migrants when they need their work and accept refugees when it is politically convenient. But as migrant communities have grown and as they have begun to influence culture in their host countries, some people have reacted with fear and anger. We describe these reactions as *xenophobic*—fear of foreigners. Political parties have used scare tactics to turn public opinion against migrants—especially refugees from Muslim-majority countries. Anti-migrant platforms have propelled far-right candidates to political office in Hungary, Poland, Greece, Britain, the United States, and other nations. As climate change and economic globalization continue to intensify, refugees will continue to flee environmental and economic conditions as well as political persecution and war. As governments place more restrictions on immigration, more migrants will be forced to cross borders illegally, endangering their lives in the process.

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## Author Bio

Bennett Sherry holds a PhD in history from the University of Pittsburgh and has undergraduate teaching experience in world history, human rights, and the Middle East at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Maine at Augusta. Additionally, he is a research associate at Pitt's World History Center. Bennett writes about refugees and international organizations in the twentieth century.

1. Some critics say globalization is “spiky” rather than flat. Others say it is “lumpy”. You might see both terms used throughout this course. They aren't exactly the same (“spiky” focuses on economic inequality, “lumpy” focuses more on who has access to ideas as well as resources), but they are pretty interchangeable. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Tungsten is a valuable metal used in electric lights and other items that reach high temperatures, and bauxite is red clay that provides a metallic mineral used in a variety of industries. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. When a company or organization is nationalized, the government takes ownership of it. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Kaepernick, a professional football player, famously chose to kneel—while everyone else stood—during the National Anthem. It was his way of calling attention to police brutality and systemic racism in the U.S. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Subcontractor: If my neighbor says he'll pay me $5 for a fresh glass of lemonade, and then I pay you $2 to go pick some lemons, squeeze them into glass, add sugar and water, that means I subcontracted the work to you. Subcontracting can be done fairly, like if I had paid you the $4.50 you deserve. But I knew you needed the money so badly I could get you to do it for $2, so this was exploitative subcontracting. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Another contender for our latest geologic epoch is Capitalocene, which was first suggested by Andreas Malm, a human geographer. Malm stresses humans' use of capital (money) and fossil fuels in the industrial age as issuing forth a new period in history. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In fact, geologists have recently designated a new age of the Holocene epoch that began 4,200 years ago with a global drought that lasted 200 years. "The Meghalayan is the first formal geologic time interval in Earth's 4.6-billion-year history that began at the same time as a global, climate-driven cultural event" (Geiger, 5). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. "The global average atmospheric carbon dioxide in 2017 was 405.0 parts per million (ppm for short), with a range of uncertainty of plus or minus 0.1 ppm. Carbon dioxide levels today are higher than at any point in at least the past 800,000 years" (Lindsey). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. As of October 1, 2019, the world population according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau was 7.6 billion. A visit to census.gov/popclock will tell you the current estimate. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. A state is any region with its own government, while a nation has that and a population who unified in many ways, i.e. culturally, socially, economically, ancestrally, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. When a non-governmental institution does not deal with international issues, it's just called NGO. But it's worth noting that people very often say NGO when they are actually talking about INGO's like the Red Cross and Amnesty International. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. To be paid a living wage means that a worker should be paid enough to be able to buy the necessary items to maintain an adequate standard of living. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Compliant meaning that the companies have made the necessary changes to meet certain requirements or standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. "Taking a hit" refers to companies losing money or causing damage to their brand. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Although an American anthropologist later discovered Menchú had fabricated some details in her account, most activists and scholars acknowledge *I, Rigoberta Menchú* still reflects a truthful representation of the collective experience of many Maya families. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. In social media, irl means "in real life," and if you needed a footnote to tell you that, then you have not given up real life connections for social media, so that's gr8. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ministerial in this context refers to administrators from various governments. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Developing nations are defined as those countries that are not fully industrialized and have a lower gross domestic product (GDP) than more developed or industrialized nations. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The G-7 refers to the Group of 7 nations, which consists of the largest and wealthiest industrialized democratic nations (currently these are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. As you already know, 'race' is not grounded in scientific evidence of shared background. Rather, it is a category that people largely invented based on just a few biological factors, especially skin color. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. In fact, even the use of tiki torches—which come from Polynesia society—represent how much even these white supremacists rely on global ideas and technologies! [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. "Roma" describes the same ethnic group who were sometimes referred to by the racist pejorative "gypsies." [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. That’s a little over $7 billion in 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Pakistan was divided into East and West Pakistan, separated by India. In 1971, East Pakistan declared independence and became Bangladesh. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)