

## CHAPTER 36

### *Globalization and Resistance*

#### CHAPTER SUMMARY

By the early 21st century, the unfolding of globalization—the increasing interconnectedness of all world parts—reflected the close of the cold war and the lessening of international conflict, a movement to free markets, new technical developments (especially the computer), and a general acceptance of global connections. Complicating factors to globalization were lingering nationalism, an important religious surge, and terrorism.

**Globalization: Causes and Processes:** Globalization is a result of political, demographic, and cultural as well as technological changes. Economic globalization involves unprecedented interconnection among the world's peoples. New political arrangements have responded to this new globalization.

**The New Technology.** New developments made possible the widespread use of the cellular phone, computers, and satellite linkages for television.

**Economic Globalization: Business Organization and Investment.** International investment has accelerated significantly. Exports and imports have increased and multinational corporations have extended business organization across political boundaries. They continue the search for cheap raw materials, and invest in nations with high interest rates. Because of their resources, multinational companies were able to determine policies in weaker nations. Even as they polluted the environment, multinationals promoted industrial skills and brought more-enlightened labor policies. Their long-term impact is unknown.

**Migration.** During the 1990s, past international migration patterns continued. Countries with negative population growth needed new, lower-skilled workers. Their arrival resulted in tensions between local populations and the new arrivals.

**Cultural Globalization.** Cultural contact and exchange accelerated by the close of the 1990s. A path to worldwide homogeneity has been caused by the adoption of Western cultural values, art forms, consumer goods, and the English language. Other cultures also contributed to the homogeneity. Models often were adapted to local cultures.

**Institutions of Globalization.** Political forms globalized more slowly than technology, business, and consumer culture. The United Nations, with mixed success, attempted to calm conflicts and help refugee populations. It similarly dealt with gender and population control issues, and combated the AIDS epidemic. The importance of other international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), grew. So did regional economic arrangements.

**Resistance and Alternatives.** Globalization generated direct protest at the end of the 20th century. Nationalism and religion, overlapping globalization, provided alternative sets of loyalties.

**Protest and Economic Uncertainties.** A vigorous international anti-globalization movement appeared by the end of the 1990s. They thought economic development was threatening the environment, exploited cheap labor, and promoted rampant consumerism. Rich nations and the wealthy, it was alleged, benefited at the expense of most people. Some world regions suffered as unfavorable trade balances damaged their economies. Reform efforts by international organizations, such as the World Bank, might increase unemployment. Many decided that globalization hurt more than it helped.

**Nationalism and New Religious Currents.** A resurgence of particular loyalties complicated globalization. Nationalism, sub-national loyalties, and religious differences all helped stimulate intolerance or violence. Religious movements, often opposed to sexuality, freedom for women, and consumerism, reacted against globalization as they insisted on their distinctiveness. New vigor came to Orthodox Christianity, Protestant fundamentalism, Hinduism, and Islam. Impoverished groups not succeeding in the global economy proved receptive.

**In Depth: How Much Historical Change?** Many analysts expected major shifts in human affairs when the cold war terminated. Some thought about an “end of history” concept; democracy would sweep the world and the need to query basic political institutions was over. It would be a more peaceful era since democracies did not fight each other. A related argument emphasized that consumer capitalism would spread a prosperity that no one wanted to jeopardize. Such predictions cannot be proved.

**The Global Environment.** The opening of the Communist world demonstrated that extreme economic devastation had occurred. Policies followed in China, southeast Asia, Brazil, and sub-Saharan Africa, and appeared equally dangerous. Economic development strategies designed to assist growth in many less-developed regions have failed to raise living standards or environmental damage. In 2000, the wealthiest one-fifth of humanity dominated consumption and produced the most pollution. No solutions were in sight.

**Environmental Issues as Global Concerns.** Environmental issues are now focal points of debate and government policy. The greenhouse effect has led to substantial warming and could have massively damaging effects. Major international conferences have addressed the problem, but governments have been slow to respond to measures that might damage their economies.

**Disease.** As in the past, global contacts have involved disease. AIDS spread rapidly from the 1980s. Results so far are less severe than earlier epidemics.

**Toward the Future.** History has demonstrated that efforts to predict the future will fail, but it does allow a basis for thinking about what will occur.

**Projecting from Trends.** What trends will continue? We do know that population growth will decline and that individuals will live longer. But unexpected happenings might alter the trend. The fate of democracies, based on past experiences, remains murky. How the mutual trends of mass consumerism and increased religious interest will interact is equally uncertain.

**Big Changes.** Some thinkers look to major departures from past developments. The 1960s “population bomb” was one such argument. Although that prediction failed, others have taken its place. Another postulation, for a postindustrial world, is still being argued.

**The Problem of the Contemporary Period.** The many changes occurring in world history during the 20th century make prediction difficult. Western dominance is past, but what will replace it? The same uncertainty applies to the status of women.

**Global Connections: Civilizations and Global Forces.** How will individual civilization develop in the future? The key civilizations have been shaping world history for a millennium. It now appears that separate characteristics of civilizations are merging and being replaced by global loyalties. But it is clear that individual civilizations retain principal characteristics. It probably is premature to postulate global homogeneity.

## KEY TERMS

**Globalization:** The increasing interconnectedness of all parts of the world; opposed by many environmental and social justice groups.

**Multinational corporations:** Business organizations with connections across political borders.

**North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA):** Agreement that created an essentially free trade zone between Mexico, Canada, and the United States, in hope of encouraging economic growth in all three nations; after difficult negotiations, went into effect January 1, 1994.

**Global Warming:** A controversial theory that suggests that there has been a gradual warming of the Earth's atmosphere which has been caused by the burning of fossil fuels and industrial pollutions.

## LECTURE SUGGESTIONS

**Which aspects of globalization do you find most influential in forming the conditions of life around the world at the close of the 20th century?**

Open discussion session with answers based on personal preferences.

**What are the varieties of prognostication for the future? Which do you find the most meaningful? What sort of future do you foresee?**

Open discussion session with answers based on personal preferences.

## COURSE REVIEW LESSON SUGGESTION

Have students trace various themes (interaction among societies, technology, social systems, cultural interaction and developments, political structures) through various areas of civilization.