

Accelerating Global Interaction

SINCE 1945

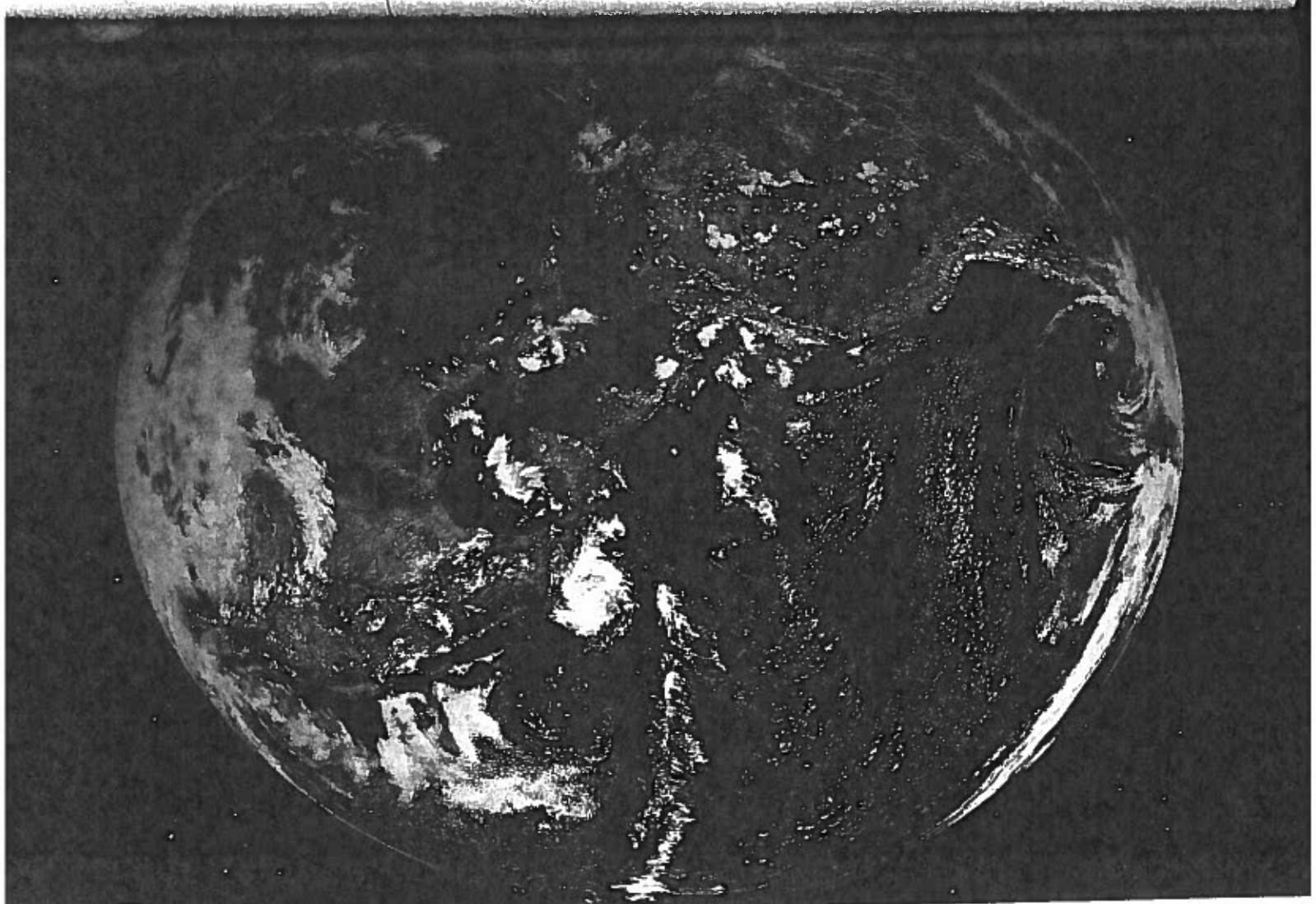
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"I think every Barbie doll is more harmful than an American missile," declared Iranian toy seller Masoumeh Rahimi in early 2002. To Rahimi, Barbie's revealing clothing, her shapely appearance, and her close association with Ken, her longtime unmarried companion, were "foreign to Iran's culture." Thus she warmly welcomed the arrival of Sara and Dara, two Iranian Muslim dolls meant to counteract the negative influence of Barbie and Ken, who had long dominated Iran's toy market. Sara and her brother Dara depicted eight-year-old twins. Sara came complete with a headscarf to cover her hair in modest Muslim fashion and a full-length white chador enveloping her from head to toe. They were described as helping each other solve problems, while looking to their loving parents for guidance, hardly the message that Barbie and Ken conveyed.¹

The widespread availability of Barbie in Muslim Iran provides one small example of the power of global commerce in the world of the early twenty-first century. The creation of Sara and Dara illustrates resistance to the cultural values associated with this American product. Still, Sara and Barbie had something in common: both were manufactured in China. This triangular relationship of the United States, Iran, and China neatly symbolized the growing integration of world economies and cultures as well as the divergences and conflicts that this process generated. Those linked but contrasting patterns are the twin themes of this final chapter.

DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, AN INCREASINGLY DENSE WEB OF POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS, economic transactions, and cultural influences cut across the world's many peoples, countries, and regions, binding them

One World: This NASA photograph, showing both the earth and the moon, reveals none of the national, ethnic, religious, or linguistic boundaries that have long divided humankind. Such pictures have both reflected and helped create a new planetary consciousness among growing numbers of people. (Image created by Reto Stockli, Nanni El Saleous, and Mari Jemott-Hilsen, NASA GSFC)



more tightly, but also more contentiously, together. By the 1990s, this process of accelerating engagement among distant peoples was widely known as globalization.

Although the term was relatively new, the process was not. From the viewpoint of world history, the genealogy of globalization reaches far into the past. The Arab, Mongol, Russian, Chinese, and Ottoman empires; the Silk Road, Indian Ocean, and trans-Saharan trade routes; the spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and especially Islam—all of these connections had long linked the societies of the Eastern Hemisphere, bringing new rulers, religions, products, diseases, and technologies to many of its peoples. Later, in the centuries after 1500, European maritime voyages and colonizing efforts launched the Columbian exchange, incorporating the Western Hemisphere and inner Africa firmly and permanently into a genuinely global network of communication, exchange, and often exploitation. During the nineteenth century, as the Industrial Revolution took hold and Western nations began a new round of empire building in Asia and Africa, that global network tightened further, and its role as generator of social and cultural change only increased.

These were the foundations on which twentieth-century globalization was built. A number of prominent developments of the past century—the world wars, the Great Depression, communism, the cold war, the end of empire—which were explored in the last three chapters, operated on a global scale. But global interaction, while continuing earlier patterns, vastly accelerated its pace after World War II. Those contacts and interactions among geographically and culturally distant peoples gave rise to a world more densely connected and converging than ever before, but also to a world deeply divided, unequal, conflicted, and violent. To illustrate this accelerating globalization, this chapter examines four major processes: the transformation of the world economy, the emergence of a global feminism, the confrontation of world religions with modernity, and the growing awareness of humankind's enormous impact on the environment.

Global Interaction and the Transformation of the World Economy

When most people speak of globalization, they are referring to the immense growth in international economic transactions that took place in the second half of the twentieth century and that continues into the twenty-first. Many have come to see this process as almost natural, certainly inevitable, and practically unstoppable. Yet the first half of the twentieth century, particularly the decades between the two world wars, witnessed a deep contraction of global economic linkages as the aftermath of World War I and then the Great Depression wreaked havoc on the world economy. International trade, investment, and labor migration dropped sharply as major states turned inward, favoring high tariffs and economic autonomy in the face of a global economic collapse.

The aftermath of World War II was very different. The capitalist victors in that conflict, led by the United States, were determined to avoid any return to such

Depression-era conditions. At a conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944, they forged a set of agreements and institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) that laid the foundation for postwar globalization. This “Bretton Woods system” negotiated the rules for commercial and financial dealings among the major capitalist countries, while promoting relatively free trade, stable currency values linked to the U.S. dollar, and high levels of capital investment.

Technology also contributed to the acceleration of economic globalization.

Containerized shipping, huge oil tankers, and air express services dramatically lowered transportation costs, while fiber optic cables and later the Internet provided the communication infrastructure for global economic interaction. Population growth, especially when tied to growing economies and modernizing societies, further fueled globalization as dozens of new nations, eager for modern development, entered the world economy.

What kind of economic globalization was taking shape? In the 1970s and after, many capitalist countries such as the United States and Great Britain abandoned major earlier political controls on economic activity as their leaders and businesspeople increasingly viewed the entire world as a single market. Known as neoliberalism, this approach to the world economy favored the reduction of tariffs, the free global movement of capital, a mobile and temporary workforce, the privatization of many state-run enterprises, the curtailment of government efforts to regulate the economy, and both tax and spending cuts. Powerful international lending agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund imposed such free-market and pro-business conditions on many poor countries if they were to qualify for much-needed loans. The collapse of the state-controlled economies of the communist world only furthered such unrestricted global capitalism. In this view, the market, operating both globally and within nations, was the most effective means of generating the holy grail of economic growth. By the end of the twentieth century, as economic historian Jeffrey Frieden put it, “capitalism was global and the globe was capitalist.”²²

Reglobalization

These were the foundations for a dramatic quickening of global economic transactions after World War II, a “reglobalization” of the world economy following the contractions of the 1930s. This immensely significant process was expressed in the accelerating circulation of goods, capital, and people.

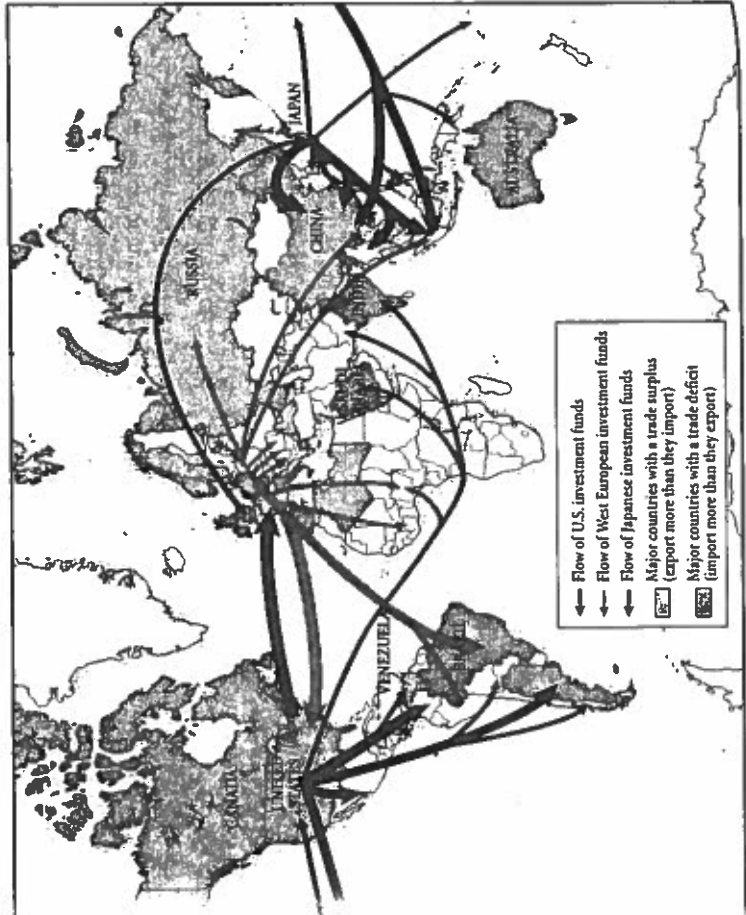


A World Economy
Indian-based call centers serve North American or European companies and customers have become common experience of globalization for many. Here employees in one such center in Pune, a major city in northeastern India, undergo voice training in order to communicate more effectively with their English-speaking callers. (Inlapse/Alamy)

Connection
In what ways has economic globalization linked the world's people more closely together?

World trade, for example, skyrocketed from a value of some \$57 billion in 1947 to well over \$7 trillion in 2001. Department stores and supermarkets around the world stocked their shelves with goods from every part of the globe. Twinings of London marketed its 120 blends of tea in more than 100 countries, and the Australian-based Kiwi shoe polish was sold in 180 countries. In 2005, about 70 percent of WalMart products reportedly included components from China. By then, Toyota had displaced Ford as the second-largest car seller in the United States and was edging up on the number one spot.

Money as well as goods achieved an amazing global mobility in three ways. The first was *foreign direct investment*, whereby a firm in, say, the United States opens a factory in China or Mexico (see Map 24.1). Such investment exploded after 1960 as companies in the rich countries sought to take advantage of cheap labor, tax breaks, and looser environmental regulations in the developing countries. A second form of money in motion has been the short-term movement of capital, in which investors annually spent trillions of dollars purchasing foreign currencies or stocks likely to increase in value and often sold them quickly thereafter, with unsettling consequences. A third form of capital movement involved the personal funds of individuals. By the end of the twentieth century, international credit cards had



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taken hold almost everywhere, allowing for easy transfer of money across national borders. In 2003, MasterCard was accepted at some 32 million businesses in 210 countries or territories.

Central to the acceleration of economic globalization have been huge global businesses known as transnational corporations (TNCs), which produce goods or deliver services simultaneously in many countries. For example, Mattel Corporation produced Barbie, that quintessentially American doll, in factories located in Indonesia, Malaysia, and China, using molds from the United States, plastic and hair from Taiwan and Japan, and cotton cloth from China. From distribution centers in Hong Kong, more than a billion Barbies were sold in 150 countries by 1999. Burgeoning in number since the 1960s, those TNCs, such as Royal Dutch Shell, Sony, and General Motors, often were of such an enormous size and economic clout that they dwarfed many countries. By 2000, 51 of the world's 100 largest economic units were in fact TNCs, not countries. In the permissive economic circumstances of recent decades, such firms have been able to move their facilities quickly from place to place in search of the lowest labor costs or the least restrictive environmental regulations. Nike, for example, during one five-year period closed twenty factories and opened thirty-five others, often thousands of miles apart.

More than ever workers too were on the move in a rapidly globalizing world economy. Examples included South Asians and West Indians seeking work and a better life in Great Britain; Algerians and West Africans in France; Yugoslavs in Germany and Switzerland; Mexicans, Cubans, and Haitians in the United States. By 2003, some 4 million Filipino domestic workers were employed in 130 countries. Young women by the hundreds of thousands from poor countries have been recruited as sex workers in wealthy nations, sometimes in conditions approaching slavery. Many highly educated professionals—doctors, nurses, engineers, computer specialists—left their homes in the Global South in a “brain drain” that clearly benefited the Global North. These flows of migrating laborers often represented a major source of income to their home countries. They also provided an inexpensive source of labor for their adopted countries, even as their presence generated mounting political and cultural tensions. Beyond those seeking work, millions of others sought refuge in the West from political oppression or civil war at home, and hundreds of millions of short-term international travelers and tourists joined the swelling ranks of people in motion.

Disparities and Resistance

What was the impact of these tightening economic links for nations and peoples around the world? That question has prompted enormous debate and controversy. Amid the swirl of contending opinion, one thing seemed reasonably clear: economic globalization accompanied, and arguably helped generate, the most remarkable spurt of economic growth in world history. On a global level, total world output grew from a value of \$7.1 trillion in 1950 to \$55.9 trillion in 2003 and on a per

■ Connection
What new or sharper
divisions has economic
globalization generated?

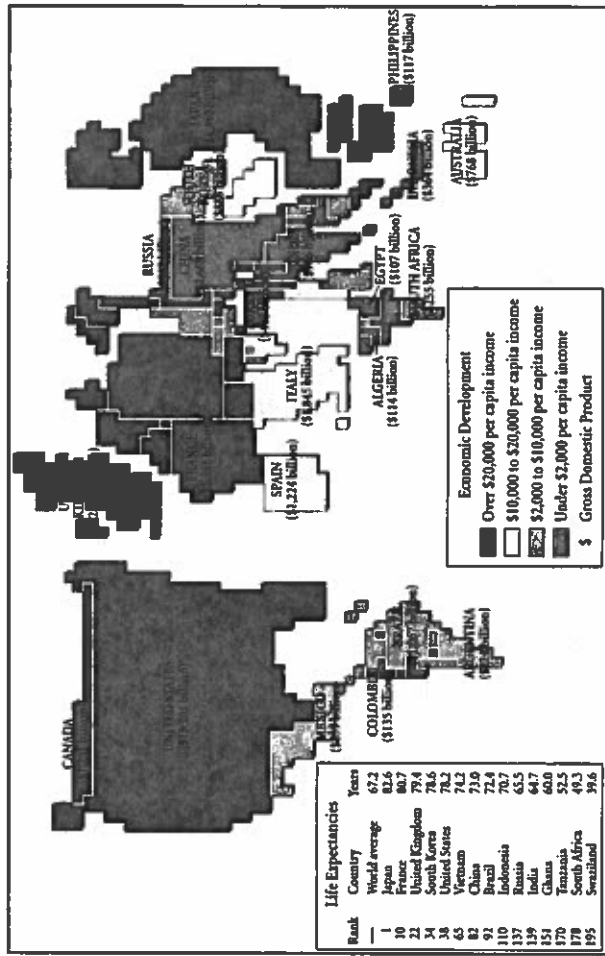
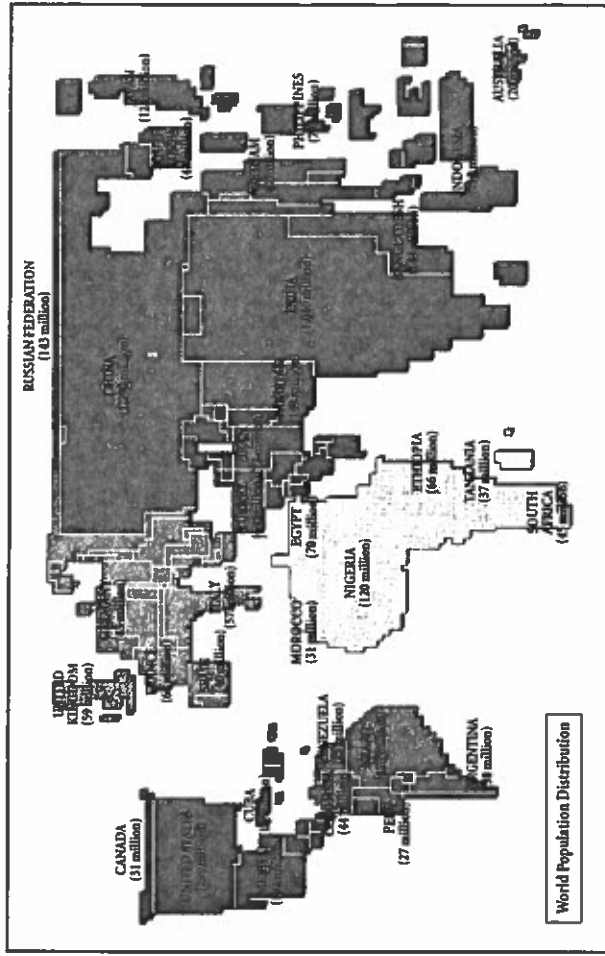
Snapshot Indicators of Reglobalization³

- Telephone lines from 150 million in 1965 to 1.5 billion in 2000
- Mobile telephones from 0 in 1978 to more than 1 billion in 2004
- Internet users from 0 in 1985 to 934 million in 2004
- International air travelers from 25 million in 1950 to 400 million in 1996
- Export processing zones from 0 in 1957 to 3,000 in 2002
- Daily foreign exchange turnover from \$15 billion in 1973 to \$1.9 trillion in 2004
- International bank loans from \$9 billion in 1972 to \$1.465 trillion in 2000
- World stock of foreign direct investment from \$66 billion in 1960 to \$7.1 trillion in 2002
- Value of international trade from \$629 billion in 1960 to \$7.43 trillion in 2001
- Number of transnational companies from 7,000 in the late 1960s to 65,000 in 2001

capita basis from \$2,835 to \$8,753.⁴ This represents an immense, rapid, and unprecedented creation of wealth with a demonstrable impact on human welfare. Life expectancies grew almost everywhere, infant mortality declined, and literacy increased. The UN Human Development Report in 1997 concluded that “in the past 50 years, poverty has fallen more than in the previous 500.”⁵

Far more problematic has been the distribution of this new wealth. Since Europe’s Industrial Revolution took hold in the early nineteenth century, a wholly new division appeared within the human community—between the rich industrialized countries, primarily in Europe and North America, and everyone else. In 1820, the ratio between the income of the top and bottom 20 percent of the world’s population was three to one. By 1991, it was eighty-six to one.⁶ The accelerated economic globalization of the twentieth century did not create this global rift, but it arguably has worsened the gap and certainly has not greatly diminished it. Even that well-known capitalist financier and investor George Soros, a billionaire many times over, acknowledged this reality in 2000: “The global capitalist system has produced a very uneven playing field. The gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider.”⁷ That gap has been evident, often tragically, in great disparities in incomes, medical care, availability of clean drinking water, educational and employment opportunities, access to the Internet, and dozens of other ways. It has shaped the life chances of practically everyone (see Map 24-2).

These disparities were the foundations for a new kind of global conflict. As the East/West division of capitalism and communism faded, differences between the rich nations of the Global North and the developing countries of the Global South assumed greater prominence in world affairs. Highly contentious issues have



Map 24-2 Global Inequality: Population and Economic Development
 These two maps illustrate in graphic form the global inequalities of the early twenty-first century. The first shows the relative size of the world’s population by region and country, the second shows the size of the economy measured by total gross domestic product and per capita income. Illustrating yet another indication of the global economic divide are figures for overall life expectancy, an indicator that has narrowed more sharply than have others.

included the rules for world trade, availability of and terms for foreign aid, representation in international economic organizations, the mounting problem of indebtedness, and environmental and labor standards. Such matters surfaced repeatedly in international negotiations during the last half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. In the 1970s, for example, a large group of developing countries joined together to demand a new international economic order that was more favorable to the poor countries. Not much success attended this effort. More recently, developing countries have contested protectionist restrictions on their agricultural exports imposed by the rich countries, which were eager to protect their own politically powerful farmers.

Beyond active resistance by the rich nations, a further obstacle to reforming the world economy in favor of the poor lay in growing disparities among the developing countries themselves (see Chapter 23). The oil-rich economies of the Middle East had little in common with the banana-producing countries of Central America. The rapidly industrializing states of China, India, and South Korea had quite different economic agendas than impoverished African countries. These disparities made common action difficult to achieve.

Economic globalization has generated inequalities not only at the global level and among developing countries, but also within individual nations, rich and poor alike. In the United States, for example, a shifting global division of labor required the American economy to shed millions of manufacturing jobs. With recent U.S. factory wages perhaps thirty times those of China, many companies moved their manufacturing operations offshore to Asia or Latin America. This left many relatively unskilled American workers in the lurch, forcing them to work in the low-wage service sector, even as other Americans were growing prosperous in emerging high-tech industries. Even some highly skilled work, such as computer programming, was outsourced to lower-wage sites in India, Ireland, Russia, and elsewhere.

Globalization divided Mexico as well. The northern part of the country, with close business and manufacturing ties to the United States, grew much more prosperous than the south, which was largely a rural agricultural area and had a far more slowly growing economy. Beginning in 1994, southern resentment boiled over in the Chiapas rebellion, which featured a strong antiglobalization platform. Its leader, Subcomandante Marcos, referred to globalization as a “process to eliminate that multitude of people who are not useful to the powerful.”⁸ China’s rapid economic growth likewise fostered mounting inequality between its rural households and those in its burgeoning cities, where income by 2000 was three times that of the countryside. Economic globalization may have brought people together as never before, but it also divided them sharply.

The hardships and grievances of those left behind or threatened by the march toward economic integration have fueled a growing popular movement aimed at criticizing and countering globalization. Known variously as an antiglobalization, alternative globalization, or global justice movement, it emerged in the 1990s as an international coalition of political activists, concerned scholars and students,

trade unions, women’s and religious organizations, environmental groups, and others, hailing from rich and poor countries alike. Thus opposition to neo-liberal globalization was itself global in scope. That opposition, though reflecting a variety of viewpoints, largely agreed that free-trade, market-driven corporate globalization lowered labor standards, fostered ecological degradation, prevented poor countries from protecting themselves against financial speculators, ignored local cultures, disregarded human rights, and enhanced global inequality, while favoring the interests of large corporations and the rich countries.

This movement appeared dramatically on the world’s radar screen in late 1999 in Seattle at a meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO). An international body representing 149 nations and charged with negotiating the rules for global commerce and promoting free trade, the WTO had become a major target of globalization critics. “The central idea of the WTO,” argued one of them, “is that *free trade*—actually the values and interests of global corporations—should supersede all other values.”⁹ Tens of thousands of protesters—academics, activists, farmers, labor union leaders from all over the world—descended on Seattle in what became a violent, chaotic, and much-publicized protest. At the city’s harbor, protest organizers created a Seattle Tea Party around the slogan “No globalization without representation,” echoing the Boston Tea Party of 1773. Subsequent meetings of the WTO and other high-level international economic gatherings were likewise greeted with large-scale protest and a heavy police presence. In 2001, alternative globalization activists created the World Social Forum, an annual gathering to coordinate strategy, exchange ideas, and share experiences, under the slogan “Another world is possible.” It was an effort to demonstrate that neo-liberal globalization was not inevitable and that the processes of a globalized economy could and should be regulated and subjected to public accountability.

Globalization and an American Empire

For many people, opposition to this kind of globalization also expressed resistance to mounting American power and influence in the world. An “American Empire,” some have argued, is the face of globalization (see Map 24.3), but scholars, commentators, and politicians have disagreed as to how best to describe the United States’ role in the postwar world. Certainly it has not been a colonial territorial empire such as that of the British or the French in the nineteenth century. Americans generally, seeking to distinguish themselves from Europeans, have vigorously denied that they were an empire at all.

In some ways, the U.S. global presence might be seen as an “informal empire,” similar to the ones that Europeans exercised in China and the Middle East during the nineteenth century. In both cases, economic penetration, political pressure, and periodic military action sought to create societies and governments compatible with the values and interests of the dominant power, but without directly governing large populations for long periods of time. In its economic dimension,

Within the United States as well, the global exercise of American power generated controversy. The Vietnam War, for example, divided the United States more sharply than at any time since the Civil War. It split families and friendships, churches and political parties. It alienated the United States from many of its traditional allies. The war in Vietnam provided a platform for a growing number of critics, both at home and abroad, who had come to resent American cultural and economic dominance in the post-1945 world. It stimulated a new sense of activism among students in the nation's colleges and universities. Finally, the Vietnam War gave rise to charges that the cold war had undermined American democracy by promoting an overly powerful, "imperial" presidency, by creating a culture of secrecy and an obsession with national security, and by limiting political debate in the country. Not a few came to see America itself as an imperialist power. A similar set of issues, protests, and controversies followed the American invasion of Iraq in the early twenty-first century.

The Globalization of Liberation: Comparing Feminist Movements

More than goods, money, and people traversed the planet during the twentieth century. So too did ideas, and none was more powerful than the ideology of liberation. Communism promised workers and peasants liberation from capitalist oppression. Nationalism offered subject peoples liberation from imperialism. Advocates of democracy sought liberation from authoritarian governments.

The 1960s in particular witnessed an unusual convergence of protest movements around the world, suggesting the emergence of a global culture of liberation. Within the United States, the civil rights demands of African Americans and Hispanic Americans; the youthful counterculture of music, sex, and drugs; and the prolonged and highly divisive protests against the war in Vietnam gave the 1960s a distinctive place in the country's recent history. Across the Atlantic, swelling protests against unresponsive bureaucracy, consumerism, and middle-class values likewise erupted, most notably in France in 1968. There a student-led movement protesting conditions in universities attracted the support of many middle-class people, who were horrified at the brutality of the police, and stimulated an enormous strike among some 9 million workers. France seemed on the edge of another revolution. Related but smaller-scale movements took place in Germany, Italy, and elsewhere.

The communist world too was rocked by protest. In 1968, the new Communist Party leadership in Czechoslovakia, led by Alexander Dubcek, initiated a sweeping series of reforms aimed at creating "socialism with a human face." Censorship ended, generating an explosion of free expression in what had been a highly repressive regime; unofficial political clubs emerged publicly; victims of earlier repression were rehabilitated; secret ballots for party elections were put in place. To the conservative leaders of the Soviet Union, this "Prague Spring" seemed to challenge communist rule itself, and they sent troops and tanks to crush it. Across the world in communist

China, another kind of protest was taking shape in that country's Cultural Revolution (see Chapter 22).

In the developing countries, a substantial number of political leaders, activists, scholars, and students developed the notion of a "third world." Their countries, many of which had recently broken free from colonial rule, would offer an alternative to both a decrepit Western capitalism and a repressive bureaucratic Soviet communism. They claimed to pioneer new forms of economic development, of grassroots democracy, and of cultural renewal. By the late 1960s, the icon of this third world-ideology was Che Guevara, the Argentine-born revolutionary who had embraced the Cuban Revolution and subsequently attempted to replicate its experience of liberation through guerrilla warfare in parts of Africa and Latin America. Various aspects of his life story—his fervent anti-imperialism, which was cast as a global struggle; his self-sacrificing lifestyle; his death in 1967 at the hands of the Bolivian military—made him a heroic figure to third-world revolutionaries as well as to Western radicals, who were disgusted with the complacency and materialism of their own societies.

No expression of the global culture of liberation held a more profound potential for change than feminism, for it represented a rethinking of the most fundamental and personal of all human relationships—that between women and men. Feminism had begun in the West in the nineteenth century with a primary focus on suffrage and in several countries had achieved the status of a mass movement by the outbreak of World War I (see Chapter 17). The twentieth century witnessed the globalization of feminism as organized efforts to address the concerns of women took shape across the world. Communist governments—in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, for example—mounted vigorous efforts to gain the support of women and to bring them into the workforce by attacking major elements of older patriarchies (see Chapter 22). But feminism took hold in many cultural and political settings, where women confronted different issues, adopted different strategies, and experienced a range of outcomes.

Feminism in the West

In the West, organized feminism had lost momentum by the end of the 1920s, when most countries had achieved universal suffrage. When it revived in the 1960s in both Western Europe and the United States, it did so with a quite different agenda. In France, for example, the writer and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir in 1949 had

■ Comparison

What distinguished feminism in the industrialized countries from that of the Global South?



Che Guevara

In life. Che was an uncompromising but failed revolutionary, while in death he became an inspiration to third-world liberation movements and a symbol of radicalism to many in the West. His image appeared widely on T-shirts and posters, and in Cuba itself a government-sponsored cult featured schoolchildren chanting each morning "We will be like Che." This billboard image of Che was erected in Havana in 1988. (Jim Page/Corbis)

published *The Second Sex*, a book arguing that women had historically been defined as “other,” or deviant from the “normal” male sex. The book soon became a central statement of a reviving women’s movement. French feminists dramatized their concerns publicly in the early 1970s when some of them attempted to lay a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier in Paris, declaring, “Someone is even more unknown than the soldier: his wife.” They staged a counter–Mother’s Day parade under the slogan “Celebrated one day; exploited all year.” To highlight their demand to control their own bodies, some 343 women signed a published manifesto stating that they had undergone an abortion, which was then illegal in France.

Across the Atlantic, millions of American women responded to Betty Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), which disclosed the identity crisis of educated women who were unfulfilled by marriage and motherhood. Some adherents of this second-wave feminism took up the equal rights agenda of their nineteenth-century predecessors, but with an emphasis now on employment and education rather than voting rights.

A more radical expression of American feminism took shape from the experience of women who had worked in other kinds of radical politics, such as the civil rights movement. Widely known as “women’s liberation,” this approach took broader aim at patriarchy as a system of domination, similar to those of race and class. One manifesto from 1969 declared:

We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants, and cheap labor. We are considered inferior beings, whose only purpose is to enhance men’s lives. . . .

Because we live so intimately with our oppressors, we have been kept from seeing our personal suffering as a political condition.¹²

Thus liberation for women meant becoming aware of their own oppression, a process that took place in thousands of consciousness-raising groups across the country. Many such women preferred direct action rather than the political lobbying favored by equal rights feminists. They challenged the Miss America contest of 1968 by tossing stink bombs in the hall, crowning a live sheep as their Miss America, and disposing of girdles, bras, high-heeled shoes, tweezers, and other “instruments of oppression” in a Freedom Trashcan. They also brought into open discussion issues involving sexuality, insisting that free love, lesbianism, and celibacy should be accorded the same respect as heterosexual marriage.

Yet another strand of Western feminism emerged from women of color. For many of them, the concerns of white, usually middle-class, feminists were hardly relevant to their oppression. Black women had always worked outside the home and so felt little need to be liberated from the chains of homemaking. Whereas white women might find the family oppressive, African American women viewed it as a secure base from which to resist racism. Solidarity with black men, rather than separation from them, was essential in confronting a racist America. Viewing mainstream feminism as “a family quarrel between White women and White men,” many women of African descent in the United States and Britain established their own organizations, with a focus on racism and poverty.¹³

Feminism in the Global South

As women mobilized outside of the Western world during the twentieth century, they faced very different situations than did white women in the United States and Europe. For much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the predominant issues—colonialism, racism, the struggle for independence, poverty, development, political oppression, and sometimes revolution—were not directly related to gender. Women were affected by and engaged with all of these efforts and were welcomed by nationalist and communist leaders, mostly men, who needed their support. Once independence or the revolution was achieved, however, the women who had joined those movements often were relegated to marginal positions.

The different conditions within developing countries sometimes generated sharp criticism of Western feminism. To many African feminists in the 1970s and beyond, the concerns of their American or European sisters were too individualistic, too focused on sexuality, and insufficiently concerned with issues of motherhood, marriage, and poverty to be of much use. Furthermore, they resented Western feminists’ insistent interest in cultural matters such as female circumcision and polygamy, which sometimes echoed the concerns of colonial-era missionaries and administrators. Western feminism could easily be seen as a new form of cultural imperialism. Moreover, many African governments and many African men defined feminism of any kind as “un-African” and associated with a hated colonialism.

Women’s movements in the Global South took shape around a wide range of issues, not all of which were explicitly gender based. In the East African country of Kenya, a major form of mobilization was the women’s group movement. Some 27,000 small associations of women, which were an outgrowth of traditional self-help groups, had a combined membership of more than a million by the late 1980s. They provided support for one another during times of need, such as weddings, births, and funerals; they took on community projects, such as building water cisterns, schools, and dispensaries; in one province, they focused on providing permanent iron roofing for their homes. Some became revolving loan societies or bought land or businesses. One woman testified to the sense of empowerment she derived from membership in her group.

I am a free woman. I bought this piece of land through my group. I can lie on it, work on it, keep goats or cows. What more do I want? My husband cannot sell it. It is mine.¹⁴

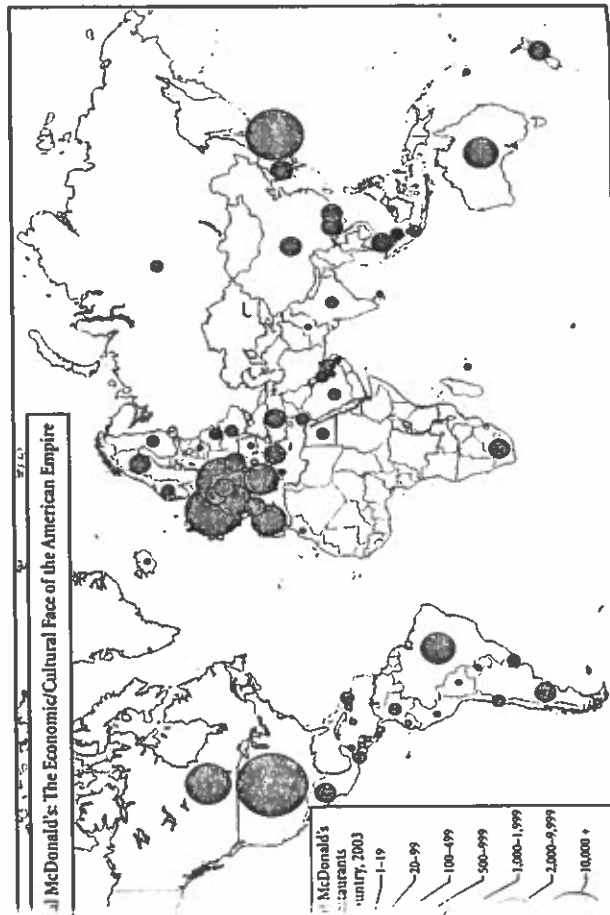
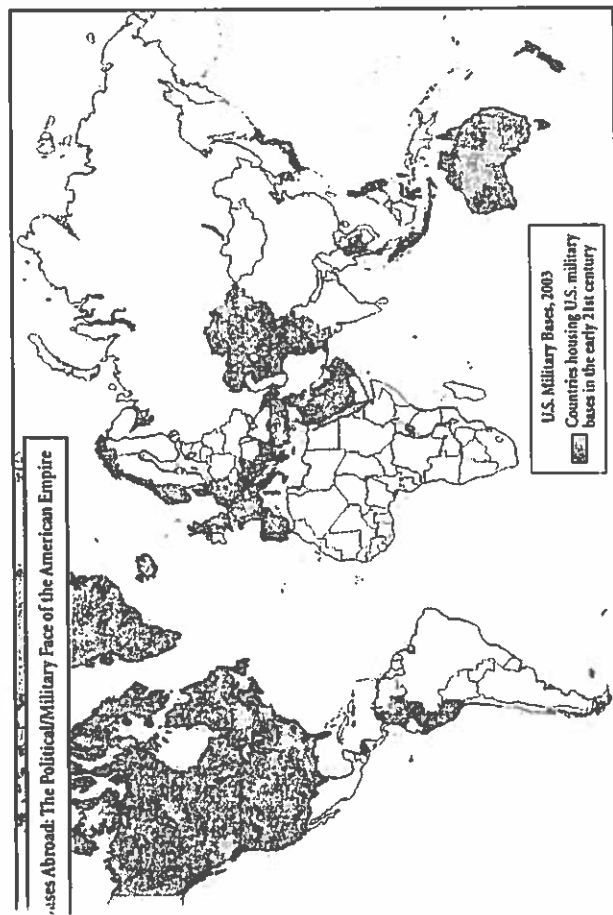
Elsewhere, other issues and approaches predominated. In the North African Islamic kingdom of Morocco, a more centrally directed and nationally focused feminist movement targeted the country’s Family Law Code, which still defined women as minors. In 2004, a long campaign by Morocco’s feminist movement, often with the help of supportive men and a liberal king, resulted in a new Family Law Code, which recognized women as equals to their husbands and allowed them to initiate divorce and to claim child custody, all of which had previously been denied.

American dominance has been termed an "empire of production," which uses its immense wealth to entice or intimidate potential collaborators.¹⁰ Some scholars have emphasized the United States' frequent use of force around the world, while others have focused attention on the "soft power" of its cultural attractiveness, its political and cultural freedoms, the economic benefits of cooperation, and the general willingness of many to follow the American lead voluntarily.

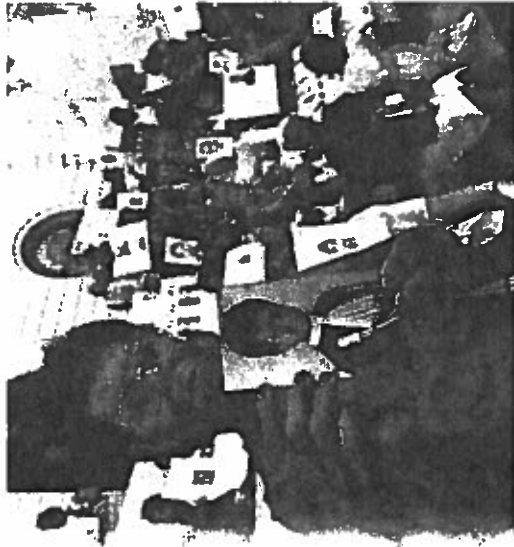
With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war by the early 1990s, U.S. military dominance was now unchecked by any equivalent power. When the United States was attacked by Islamic militants on September 11, 2001, that power was unleashed first against Afghanistan (2001), which had sheltered the al-Qaeda instigators of that attack, and then against Iraq (2003), where Saddam Hussein allegedly had been developing weapons of mass destruction. In the absence of the Soviet Union, the United States could act unilaterally without fear of triggering a conflict with another major power. Although the Afghan and Iraqi regimes were quickly defeated, establishing a lasting peace and rebuilding badly damaged Muslim countries proved a difficult task. Thus, within a decade of the Soviet collapse, the United States found itself in yet another global struggle, an effort to contain or eliminate Islamic terrorism.

In the final quarter of the twentieth century, as its relative military strength peaked, the United States faced growing international economic competition. The recovery of Europe and Japan and the emergent industrialization of South Korea, Taiwan, China, and India substantially reduced the United States' share of overall world production from about 50 percent in 1945 to 20 percent in the 1980s. Accompanying this relative decline was a sharp reversal of the country's trade balance as U.S. imports greatly exceeded its exports. Once the world's leading creditor, the United States now became its leading debtor. Lee Iacocca, president of Chrysler Corporation, registered the dismay that many Americans felt at this turn in their fortunes: "We send Japan low-value soybeans, wheat, corn, coal, and cotton. They send us high-value autos, motorcycles, TV sets, and oil well casings. It's 1776 and we're a colony again."¹¹

However it might be defined, the exercise of American power, like that of many empires, was resisted abroad and contested at home. In Vietnam, Cuba, Iraq, and elsewhere, armed struggle against U.S. intervention was both costly and painful. During the cold war, the governments of India, Egypt, and Ethiopia sought to diminish American influence in their affairs by turning to the Soviet Union or playing off the two superpowers against each other. Even France, resenting U.S. domination, withdrew from the military structure of NATO in 1967 and expelled all foreign-controlled troops from the country. Many intellectuals, fearing the erosion of their own cultures in the face of well-financed American media around the world, have decried American "cultural imperialism." By the early twenty-first century, the United States' international policies—such as its refusal to accept the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court; its refusal to ratify the Kyoto protocol on global warming; its doctrine of preemptive war, which was exercised in Iraq; and its apparent use of torture—had generated widespread opposition.



Map 24.3 Two Faces of an "American Empire"
 Those who argue that the United States constituted an empire in the second half of the twentieth century point both to its political/military alliances around the world and to U.S. economic and cultural penetration of many countries. The distribution of U.S. military bases and of McDonald's restaurants indicates something of the scope of America's global presence in the early twenty-first century.



In Chile, a women's movement emerged as part of a national struggle against the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, who ruled the country from 1973 to 1990. Because they were largely regarded as "invisible" in the public sphere, women were able to organize extensively, despite the repression of the Pinochet regime. From this explosion of organizing activity emerged a women's movement that crossed class lines and parry affiliations. Human rights activists, most of them women, called attention to the widespread use of torture and to the "disappearance" of thousands of opponents of the regime, while demanding the restoration of democracy. Poor urban women by the tens of thousands organized soup kitchens, craft workshops, and shopping collectives, all aimed at the economic survival of their families. Smaller numbers of middle-class women brought more distinctly feminist perspectives to the movement and argued pointedly for "democracy in the country and in the home." This diverse women's movement was an important part of the larger national protest that returned Chile to democratic government in 1990.

In South Korea as in Chile, women's mobilization contributed to a "mass people's movement" that brought a return to democracy by the late 1980s, after a long period of highly authoritarian rule. The women's movement in South Korea drew heavily on the experience of young female workers in the country's export industries. In those factories, they were poorly paid, were subjected to exhausting working conditions and frequent sexual harassment, and lived in crowded company dormitories, often called "chicken coops." Such women spearheaded a democratic trade union movement during the 1970s, and in the process many of them developed both a feminist and a class consciousness.

International Feminism

Perhaps the most impressive achievement of feminism in the twentieth century was its ability to project the "woman question" as a global issue and to gain international recognition for the view that "women's rights are human rights."¹⁵ Like slavery and empire before it, patriarchy lost at least some of its legitimacy during this most recent century, although clearly it has not been vanquished.

Feminism registered as a global issue when the United Nations, under pressure from women activists, declared 1975 as International Women's Year and the next ten

years as the Decade for Women. The United Nations also sponsored a series of World Conferences on Women over the next twenty years. By 2006, 183 nations had ratified a UN Convention to Eliminate Discrimination against Women, which committed them to promote women's legal equality, to end discrimination, to actively encourage women's development, and to protect women's human rights. Clearly this international attention to women's issues was encouraging to feminists operating in their own countries and in many places stimulated both research and action.

This growing international spotlight on women's issues also revealed sharp divisions within global feminism. One issue was determining who had the right to speak on behalf of women at international gatherings—the official delegates of male-dominated governments or the often more radical unofficial participants representing various nongovernmental organizations. North/South conflicts also surfaced at these international conferences. In preparing for the Mexico City gathering in 1975, the United States attempted to limit the agenda to matters of political and civil rights for women, whereas delegates from third-world and communist countries wanted to include issues of economic justice, decolonization, and disarmament. Feminists from the South resented the dominance and contested the ideas of their Northern sisters. One African group highlighted the differences.

While patriarchal views and structures oppress women all over the world, women are also members of classes and countries that dominate others and enjoy privileges in terms of access to resources. Hence, contrary to the best intentions of "sisterhood," not all women share identical interests.¹⁶

Nor did all third-world groups have identical views. Some Muslim delegates at the Beijing Conference in 1995 opposed a call for equal inheritance for women, because Islamic law required that sons receive twice the amount that daughters inherit. In contrast, Africans, especially in non-Muslim countries, were aware of how many children had been orphaned by AIDS and felt that girls' chances for survival depended on equal inheritance.

Beyond such divisions within international feminism lay a global backlash among those who felt that its radical agenda had undermined family life, the proper relationship of men and women, and civilization generally. To Phyllis Schlafly, a prominent American opponent of the Equal Rights Amendment, feminism was a "disease" that brought in its wake "fear, sickness, pain, anger, hatred, danger, violence, and all manner of ugliness."¹⁷ In the Islamic world, Western-style feminism, with its claims of gender equality and open sexuality, was highly offensive to many and fueled movements of religious revivalism that invited or compelled women to wear the veil and sometimes lead a highly restricted life. The Vatican, some Catholic and Muslim countries, and at times the U.S. government took strong exception to aspects of global feminism, particularly its emphasis on reproductive rights, including access to abortion and birth control. Thus feminism was global as the twenty-first century dawned, but it was very diverse and much contested.

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¹⁷ Diego Guadice

Religion and Global Modernity

Beyond liberation and feminism, a further dimension of cultural globalization took shape in the challenge that modernity presented to the world's religions. To the most "advanced" thinkers of the past several hundred years—Enlightenment writers in the eighteenth century, Karl Marx in the nineteenth, socialist intellectuals and secular-minded people in the twentieth—supernatural religion was headed for extinction in the face of modernity, science, communism, or globalization. In some places—Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the Soviet Union, for example—religious belief and practice had declined sharply. Moreover, the spread of a scientific culture around the world persuaded small minorities everywhere, often among the most highly educated, that the only realities worth considering were those that could be measured with the techniques of science. To such people, all else was superstition, born of ignorance. Nevertheless, the far more prominent trends of the last century have been those that involved the further spread of major world religions, their resurgence in new forms, their opposition to elements of a secular and global modernity, and their political role as a source of community identity and conflict. Contrary to earlier expectations, religion has played an unexpectedly powerful role in this most recent century.

Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam had long functioned as transregional cultures, spreading far beyond their places of origin. That process continued in the twentieth century. Buddhist ideas and practices such as meditation found a warm reception in the West, as did yoga, originally a mind-body practice of Indian origin. Christianity of various kinds spread widely in non-Muslim Africa and South Korea and less extensively in parts of India. By the end of the century, it was growing even in China, where perhaps 7 percent of China's population—some 82 million people—claimed allegiance to the faith. No longer a primarily European or North American religion, Christianity by the early twenty-first century found some 62 percent of its adherents in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Moreover, millions of migrants from the Islamic world planned their religion solidly in Europe and North America. In the United States, for example, a substantial number of African Americans and smaller numbers of European Americans engaged in Islamic practice. More than ever before, religious pluralism characterized the world's societies, confronting people with the need to make choices in a domain of life previously regarded as given and fixed.

Fundamentalism on a Global Scale

Religious vitality in the twentieth century was expressed not only in the spread of particular traditions to new areas but also in the vigorous response of those traditions to the modernizing and globalizing world in which they found themselves. One such response has been widely called "fundamentalism," a militant piety—defensive, assertive, and exclusive—that took shape to some extent in every major religious tradition. Many features of the modern world, after all, appeared threatening

to established religion. The scientific and secular focus of global modernity directly challenged the core beliefs of supernatural religion. Furthermore, the social upheavals connected with capitalism, industrialization, and globalization thoroughly upset customary class, family, and gender relationships that had long been sanctified by religious tradition. Nation-states, often associated with particular religions, were likewise undermined by the operation of a global economy and challenged by the spread of alien cultures. In much of the world, these disruptions came at the hands of foreigners, usually Westerners, in the form of military defeat, colonial rule, economic dependency, and cultural intrusion.

To such threats, fundamentalism represented a religious response, characterized by one scholar as "embattled forms of spirituality...experienced as a cosmic war between the forces of good and evil."¹⁸ Although fundamentalisms everywhere have looked to the past for ideals and models, their rejection of modernity was selective, not wholesale. What they sought was an alternative modernity, infused with particular religious values. Most, in fact, made active use of modern technology to communicate their message and certainly sought the potential prosperity associated with modern life. Extensive educational and propaganda efforts, political mobilization of their followers, social welfare programs, and sometimes violence ("terrorism" to their opponents) were among the means that fundamentalists employed.

The term "fundamentalism" derived from the United States, where religious conservatives in the early twentieth century were outraged by critical and "scientific" approaches to the Bible, by Darwinian evolution, and by liberal versions of Christianity that accommodated these heresies. They called for a return to the fundamentals of the faith, which included the inerrancy of the scriptures, the virgin birth and physical resurrection of Jesus, and a belief in miracles. After World War II, American Protestant fundamentalism came to oppose political liberalism and "big government," the sexual revolution of the 1960s, homosexuality and abortion rights, and secular humanism generally. Many fundamentalists saw the United States on the edge of an abyss. For one major spokesman, Francis Schaeffer (1912–1984), the West was about to enter

an electronic dark age, in which the new pagan hordes, with all the power of technology at their command, are on the verge of obliterating the last strongholds of civilized humanity. A vision of darkness lies before us. As we leave the shores of Christian Western man behind, only a dark and turbulent sea of despair stretches endlessly ahead... unless we fight.¹⁹

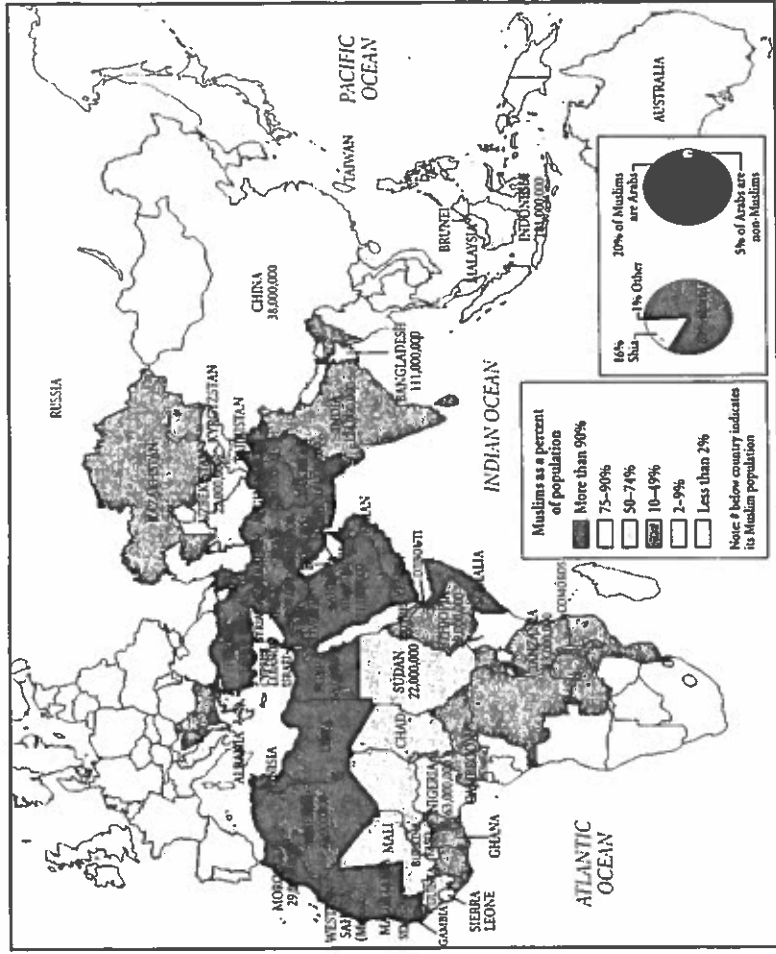
And fight they did. At first, fundamentalists sought to separate themselves from the secular world in their own churches and schools, but from the 1970s on, they entered the political arena as the "religious right," determined to return America to a "godly path." "We have enough votes to run this country," declared Pat Robertson, a major fundamentalist evangelist and broadcaster, who ran for president in 1988. Conservative fundamentalist Christians, no longer willing to restrict their activities to personal conversion, had emerged as a significant force in American political life by the end of the century.

In the very different setting of independent India, another fundamentalist movement—known as *Hindutva*, or Hindu nationalism—took shape during the 1980s. Like American fundamentalism, it represented a politicization of religion within a democratic context. To its advocates, India was, and always had been, an essentially Hindu country, even though it had been overwhelmed in recent centuries by Muslim invaders, then by the Christian British, and most recently by the secular state of the postindependence decades. The leaders of modern India, they argued, and particularly its first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, were “the self-proclaimed secularists who...seek to remake India in the Western image,” while repudiating its basically Hindu religious character. The Hindutva movement took political shape in an increasingly popular party called the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with much of its support coming from urban middle-class or upper-caste people who resented the state’s efforts to cater to the interests of Muslims, Sikhs, and the lower castes. Muslims in particular were defined as outsiders, potentially more loyal to a Muslim Pakistan than to India. The BJP became a major political force in India during the 1980s and 1990s, winning a number of elections at both the state and national levels and promoting a distinctly Hindu identity in education, culture, and religion.

Creating Islamic Societies: Resistance and Renewal in the World of Islam

The most prominent of the fundamentalisms that emerged in the late twentieth century was surely that of Islam, which was permanently etched in Americans’ memory in the image of Osama bin Laden and the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. However, this violent event was only one expression of a much larger phenomenon—an effort among growing numbers of Muslims to create a new religious/political order centered on the teachings of Islam.

Emerging strongly in the last quarter of the century, this Islamic activism gained strength from the enormous disappointments that had accumulated in the Muslim world by the 1970s. Political independence had given rise to major states—Egypt, Iran, Algeria, and others—that pursued essentially Western and secular policies of nationalism, socialism, and economic development, often with only lip service to an Islamic identity. These policies were not very successful, however. A number of endemic problems—vastly overcrowded cities with few services, widespread unemployment, pervasive corruption, slow economic growth, a mounting gap between the rich and poor—flew in the face of the great expectations that had accompanied the struggle against European domination. Despite independence from a century or more of humiliating Western imperialism, foreign intrusion still persisted. Israel, widely regarded as an outpost of the West, had been reestablished as a Jewish state in the very center of the Islamic world in 1948. In 1967, Israel inflicted a devastating defeat on Arab forces in the Six-Day War and seized various Arab territories, including the holy city of Jerusalem. Furthermore, broader signs of



Map 24-4 The Islamic World in the Early Twenty-first Century

An Islamic world of well over a billion people incorporated much of the Afro-Asian landmass but was divided among many nations and along linguistic and ethnic lines as well. The long-term split between the majority Sunnis and the minority Shias also sharpened in the new millennium.

Western cultural penetration—secular schools, alcohol, Barbie dolls, European and American movies, scantily clad women—appeared frequently in the Muslim world.

This was the context in which the idea of an Islamic alternative to Western models of modernity began to take hold. The intellectual and political foundations of this Islamic renewal had been established earlier in the century. Its leading figures, such as the Indian Mawilana Mawdudi and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, insisted that the Quran and the sharia (Islamic law) provided a guide for all of life—political, economic, and spiritual—and a blueprint for a distinctly Islamic modernity not dependent on Western ideas. It was the departure from Islamic principles, they argued, that had led the Islamic world into decline and subordination to the West, and only a return to the “straight path of Islam” would ensure a revival of Muslim societies. That effort to return to Islamic principles was labeled “jihad,” an ancient and evocative religious term that refers to “struggle” or “striving” to please God. In its twentieth-century political expression, jihad included the defense of an authentic Islam against Western aggression and vigorous efforts to achieve the Islamization of social and political life within Muslim countries. It was a posture that would enable Muslims to resist the seductive but poisonous culture of the West, which

Sayyid Qutb had witnessed during a visit to the United States in the late 1940s. He was shocked by what he saw.

Look at this capitalism with its monopolies, its usury... at this individual freedom, devoid of human sympathy and responsibility for relatives except under force of law; at this materialistic attitude which deadens the spirit; at this behavior like animals which you call "free mixing of the sexes"; at this vulgarity which you call "emancipation of women"; at this evil and fanatical racial discrimination.²⁰

Such ideas soon echoed widely all across the Islamic world and found expression in many ways. At the level of personal life, many people became more religiously observant, attending mosque, praying regularly, and fasting. Substantial numbers of women, many of them young, urban, and well educated, adopted modest Islamic dress and the veil quite voluntarily. Participation in Sufi mystical practices increased. Furthermore, many governments sought to anchor themselves in Islamic rhetoric and practice. Under pressure from Islamic activists, the government of Sudan in the 1980s adopted Quranic punishments for various crimes (such as amputating the hand of a thief) and announced a total ban on alcohol, dramatically dumping thousands of bottles of beer and wine into the Nile. During the 1970s, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt claimed the title of "Believer-President," referred frequently to the Quran, and proudly displayed his "prayer mark," a callus on his forehead caused by touching his head to the ground in prayer.

All over the Muslim world, from North Africa to Indonesia, Islamic renewal movements spawned organizations that operated legally to provide social services—

Hamas in Action

The Palestinian militant organization Hamas, founded in 1987 as an offshoot of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, illustrates two dimensions of Islamic radicalism. On the one hand, Hamas repeatedly sent suicide bombers to target Israeli civilians and sought the elimination of the Israeli state. A group of would-be suicide bombers are shown here in white robes during the funeral of colleagues killed by Israeli security forces in late 2003. On the other hand, Hamas ran a network of social services, providing schools, clinics, orphanages, summer camps, soup kitchens, and libraries for Palestinians. The classroom pictured here was part of a school founded by Hamas. (Andrea Comas/Reuters/Corbis, Abid Karib/Getty Images)



schools, clinics, youth centers, legal-aid centers, financial institutions, publishing houses—that the state offered inadequately or not at all. Islamic activists took leadership roles in unions and professional organizations of teachers, journalists, engineers, doctors, and lawyers. Such people embraced modern science and technology but sought to embed these elements of modernity within a distinctly Islamic culture. Some served in official government positions or entered political life where it was possible to do so. The Algerian Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win elections in 1992, when a frightened military government intervened to cancel the elections, an action that plunged the country into a decade of bitter civil war. In Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon, Islamic parties made impressive electoral showings in the 1990s and the early twenty-first century.

Another face of Islamic renewal, however, sought the violent overthrow of what they saw as compromised regimes in the Muslim world. One such group, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, assassinated President Sadat in 1981, following Sadat's brutal crackdown on both Islamic and secular opposition groups. One of the leaders of Islamic Jihad explained:

We have to establish the Rule of God's Religion in our own country first, and to make the Word of God supreme.... There is no doubt that the first battlefield for jihad is the extermination of these infidel leaders and to replace them by a complete Islamic Order.²¹

Two years earlier in Mecca, members of another radical Islamic group sought the overthrow of the Saudi government. They despised its alliance with Western powers, the corrupt and un-Islamic lifestyle of its leaders, and the disruptive consequences of its oil-fueled modernization program. They even invaded the Grand Mosque, Islam's most sacred shrine. In Iran (1979) and Afghanistan (1996), Islamic movements succeeded in coming to power and began to implement a radical program of Islamization based on the sharia (see Chapter 23 for Iran).

Islamic revolutionaries also took aim at hostile foreign powers. Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon, supported by the Islamic regime in Iran, targeted Israel with popular uprisings, suicide bombings, and rocket attacks in response to the Israeli occupation of Arab lands. For some, Israel's very existence was illegitimate. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 prompted widespread opposition aimed at liberating the country from atheistic communism and creating an Islamic state. Sympathetic Arabs from the Middle East flocked to the aid of their Afghan compatriots.

Among them was the young Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi Arab, who created an organization, al-Qaeda (meaning "the base" in Arabic), to funnel fighters and funds to the Afghan resistance. At the time, bin Laden and the Americans were on the same side, both opposing Soviet expansion into Afghanistan, but they soon parted ways. Returning to his home in Saudi Arabia, bin Laden became disillusioned and radicalized when the government of his country allowed the stationing of "infidel" U.S. troops in Islam's holy land during and after the first American war against Iraq

makes one less of a Muslim to promote economic growth, to master the information revolution, and to demand justice for women.²³

Within other religious traditions as well, believers found various ways of responding to global modernity. More liberal or mainstream Christian groups spoke to the ethical issues arising from economic globalization. Many Christian organizations, for example, were active in agitating for debt relief for poor countries. Pope John Paul II was openly concerned about “the growing distance between rich and poor, unfair competition which puts the poor nations in a situation of ever-increasing inferiority.” “Liberation theology,” particularly in Latin America, sought a Christian basis for action in the areas of social justice, poverty, and human rights, while viewing Jesus as liberator as well as savior. In Asia, a growing movement known as “socially engaged Buddhism” addressed the needs of the poor through social reform, educational programs, health services, and peace-making action during times of conflict and war. The Dalai Lama has famously advocated a peaceful resolution of Tibet’s relationship with China. Growing interest in communication and exchange among the world’s religions was expressed at a World Peace Summit in 2000, when more than 1,000 religious and spiritual leaders met to explore how they might more effectively confront the world’s many conflicts. In short, religious responses to global modernity were articulated in many voices.

The World’s Environment and the Globalization of Environmentalism

Even as world religions, fundamentalist and otherwise, challenged global modernity on cultural or spiritual grounds, burgeoning environmental movements in the 1960s and after did so with an eye to the human impact on the earth and its many living creatures, including ourselves. Among the distinctive features of the twentieth century, none has been more pronounced than humankind’s growing ability to alter the natural order and the mounting awareness of this phenomenon. When the wars, revolutions, and empires of this most recent century have faded from memory, environmental transformation and environmental consciousness may well seem to future generations the decisive feature of that century.

The Global Environment Transformed

Underlying the environmental changes of the twentieth century were three other factors that vastly magnified the human impact on earth’s ecological systems far beyond anything previously known.²⁴ One was the explosion of human numbers, an unprecedented quadrupling of the world’s population in a single century. Another lay in the amazing new ability of humankind to tap the energy potential of fossil fuels—coal in the nineteenth century and oil in the twentieth. Hydroelectricity, natural gas, and nuclear power added to the energy resources

■ **Change**
How can we explain the dramatic increase in the human impact on the environment in the twentieth century?

in 1991. By the mid-1990s, he had found a safe haven in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, from which he and other leaders of al-Qaeda planned their now infamous attack on the World Trade Center and other targets. Although they had no standing as Muslim clerics, in 1998 they issued a *fatwa*, or religious edict, declaring war on America.

[F]or over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples.... [T]he ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and the holy mosque (in Mecca) from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim.²²

Elsewhere as well—in East Africa, Indonesia, Great Britain, Spain, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen—al-Qaeda or groups associated with it launched scattered attacks on Western interests. At the international level, the great enemy was not Christianity itself or even Western civilization, but irreligious Western-style modernity, U.S. imperialism, and an American-led economic globalization so aptly symbolized by the World Trade Center. Ironically, al-Qaeda itself was a modern and global organization, many of whose members were highly educated professionals from a variety of countries. Despite their focus on the West, the struggles undertaken by politicized Islamic activists were as much within the Islamic world as they were with the external enemy. If Islamic fundamentalism represented a clash of cultures or civilizations, that collision took place among different conceptions of Islam at least as sharply as with the outlook and practices of the modern West.

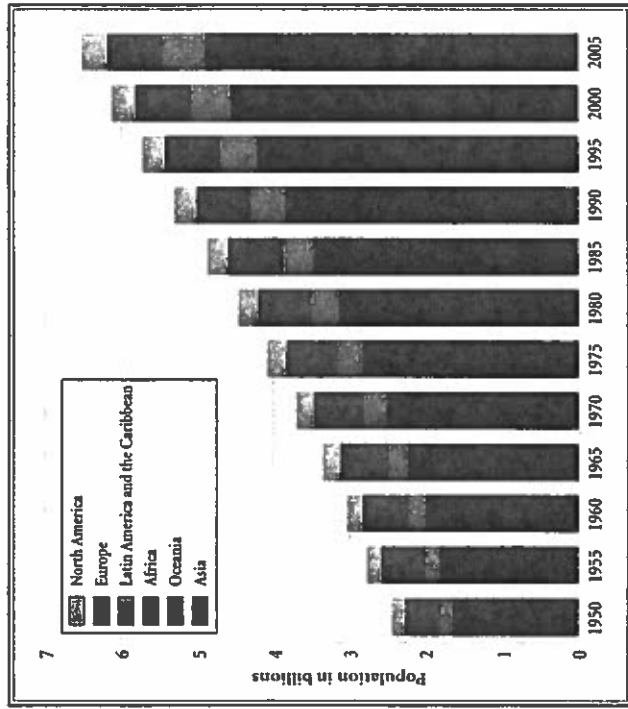
Religious Alternatives to Fundamentalism

Militant revolutionary fundamentalism has certainly not been the only religious response to modernity and globalization within the Islamic world. Many who shared a concern to embed Islamic values more centrally in their societies have acted peacefully and within established political structures. Considerable debate among them has raised questions about the proper role of the state, the difference between the eternal law of God (*sharia*) and the human interpretations of it, the rights of women, the possibility of democracy, and many other issues. Some Muslim intellectuals and political leaders have called for a dialogue between civilizations; others have argued that traditions can change in the face of modern realities without losing their distinctive Islamic character. In 1996, Anwar Ibrahim, a major political and intellectual figure in Malaysia, insisted that

[Southeast Asian Muslims] would rather strive to improve the welfare of the women and children in their midst than spend their days elaborately defining the nature and institutions of the ideal Islamic state. They do not believe it

Snapshot World Population Growth, 1950–2005²⁵

The great bulk of the world's population growth in the second half of the twentieth century occurred in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.



available to our species. These new sources of energy made possible a third contribution to environmental transformation—phenomenal economic growth—as modern science and technology immensely increased the production of goods and services. None of this occurred evenly across the planet. An average North American in the 1990s, for example, used 50 to 100 times more energy than an average Bangladeshi. But almost everywhere—in capitalist, communist, and developing countries alike—the idea of economic growth as something possible and desirable took hold as a part of global culture.

These three factors were the foundations for the immense environmental transformations of the twentieth century. Human activity had always altered the natural order, usually on a local basis, but now the scale of those disruptions assumed global proportions. The growing numbers of the poor and the growing consumption of the rich led to the doubling of cropland and a corresponding contraction of the world's forests and grasslands. With diminished habitats, numerous species of plants and animals either disappeared or were threatened with extinction. The human remaking of the environment also greatly increased the population of cattle, pigs, chickens, rats, and dandelions.

The global spread of modern industry, which was heavily dependent on fossil fuels, created a pall of air pollution in many major cities. By the 1970s, traffic police in Tokyo frequently wore face masks. In Mexico City, officials estimated in 2002 that air pollution killed 35,000 people every year. Industrial pollution in the Soviet Union rendered about half of the country's rivers severely polluted by the late 1980s, while fully 20 percent of its population lived in regions defined as "ecological disasters." The release of chemicals known as chlorofluorocarbons thinned the ozone layer, which protects the earth from excessive ultraviolet radiation.

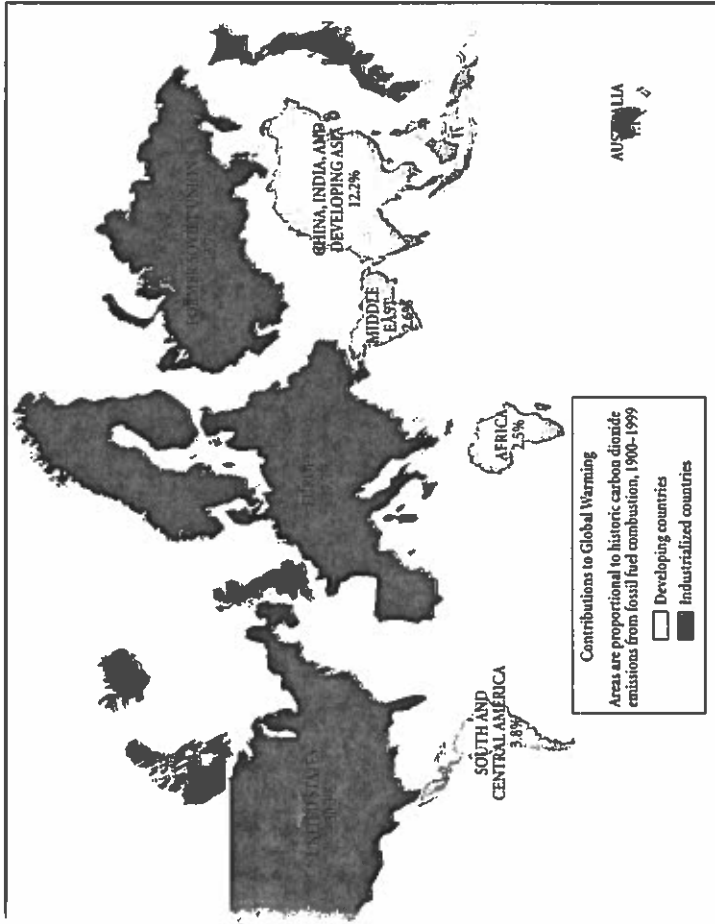
The most critical and intractable environmental transformation was global warming. By the end of the twentieth century, a worldwide scientific consensus had emerged that the vastly increased burning of fossil fuels, which emit heat-trapping greenhouse gases, as well as the loss of trees that would otherwise remove carbon dioxide from the air, had begun to warm the atmosphere significantly. Although considerable disagreement existed about the rate and likely consequences of this process, concern about melting glaciers and polar ice caps, rising sea levels, thawing permafrost, extreme hurricanes, further species extinctions, and other ecological threats punctuated global discussion of this issue. It was clearly a global phenomenon, and it prompted a global awareness of the problem (see Map 24.5).

Green and Global

Environmentalism began in the nineteenth century as Romantic poets such as William Blake and William Wordsworth denounced the industrial era's "dark satanic mills," which threatened the "green and pleasant land" of an earlier England. The "scientific management" of nature, both in industrializing countries and in European colonies, represented another element of emerging environmental awareness among a few. So did the "wilderness idea," which aimed to preserve untouched areas from human disruption.²⁶ None of these strands of environmentalism attracted a mass following or provoked a global response. Not until the second half of the twentieth century, and then quite rapidly, did environmentalism achieve a worldwide dimension, although it was expressed in many quite different ways.

This second-wave environmentalism began in the West with the publication in 1962 of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, an exposure of the chemical contamination of the environment that threatened both human health and the survival of many other species. She wrote of a "strange stillness" in a world where the songs of birds might no longer be heard. The book touched a nerve, generating an enormous response and effectively launching the environmental movement in the United States. Here, as virtually everywhere else, the impetus for action came from the grass roots and citizen protest. By the early 1990s, some 14 million Americans, one in seven adults, had joined one of the many environmental organizations—national or local—that aimed much of their effort at lobbying political parties and businesses. In Europe, the Club of Rome, a global think tank, issued a report in 1972 called *Limits to Growth*, which warned of resource exhaustion and the collapse of industrial society in the face of

■ **Comparison**
What differences emerged between environmentalism in the Global North and that in the Global South?

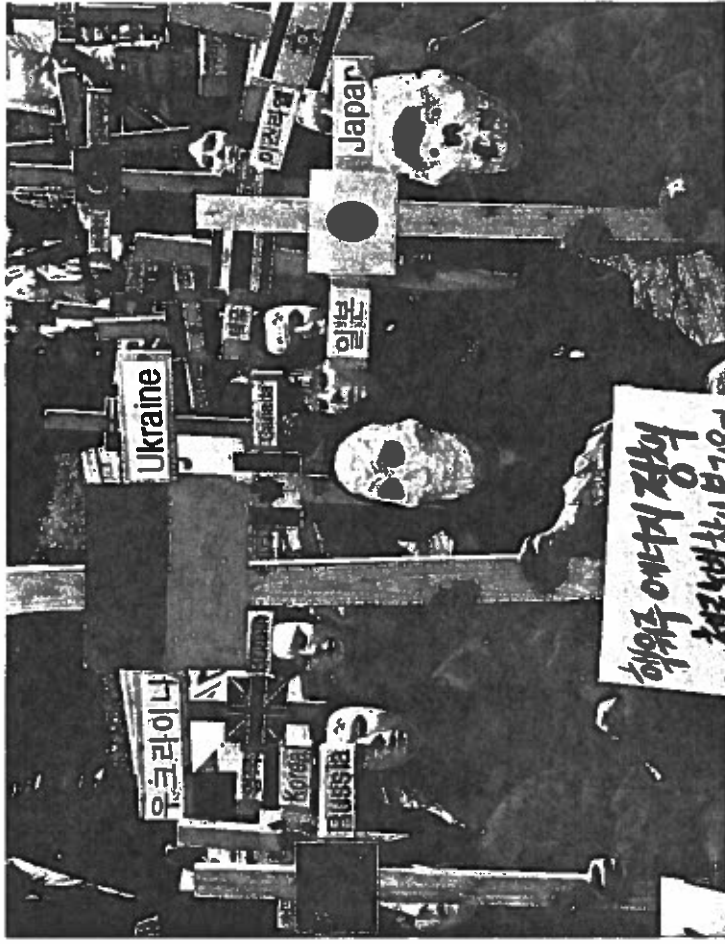


Map 24.5 Carbon Dioxide Emissions in the Twentieth Century

The source of carbon dioxide emissions, the chief human contribution to global warming, was distributed quite unevenly across the planet. Although the industrialized countries have been largely responsible for those emissions during the twentieth century, India and China in particular have assumed a much greater role in this process as their industrialization boomed in the early twenty-first century. The historically unequal distribution of those emissions has prompted much controversy between the countries of the Global North and the Global South about who should make the sacrifices required to address the problem of global warming.

unrelenting economic growth. The German environmental movement was distinctive in that its activists directly entered the political arena as the Green Party, which came to have a substantial role in German national politics. One of the Greens' main concerns was opposition to nuclear energy. Beyond addressing environmental pollution, Western activists focused much attention on wilderness issues, opposing logging, road building, and other development efforts in remaining unspoiled areas.

Quite quickly, during the 1970s and 1980s, environmentalism took root in the developing countries as well. There it often assumed a different character—it was more locally based and had fewer large national organizations than in the West; it involved poor people rather than affluent members of the middle class; it was less engaged in political lobbying and corporate strategies; it was more concerned with issues of food security, health, and basic survival than with the rights of nature or



Environmentalism in Action
These South Korean environmental activists are wearing death masks and holding crosses representing various countries during an anti-nuclear protest in Seoul in 1996, exactly ten years after a large-scale nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union. The lead protester holds a placard reading “Don’t forget Chernobyl!” (AP Image/Mun-Hai-Hueng)

wilderness protection; and it was more closely connected to movements for social justice.²⁷ Thus, whereas Western environmentalists defended forests where few people lived, the Chikpo or “tree-hugging” movement in India sought to protect the livelihood of farmers, artisans, and herders living in areas subject to extensive deforestation. A massive movement to prevent or limit the damming of India’s Narmada River derived from the displacement of local people; similar anti-dam protests in the American Northwest were more concerned with protecting salmon runs.

Western environmentalists often called on individuals to change their values by turning away from materialism toward an appreciation of the intricate and fragile web of life that sustains us all. In the Philippines, by contrast, environmental activists confronting the operation of foreign mining companies have sought fundamental changes in the political and social structure of their country. Thus environmental protest has overlapped with other movements seeking to challenge established power structures and social hierarchies. Coalitions of numerous local groups—representing various religious, women’s, human rights, indigenous peoples, peasant, and political organizations—frequently mobilized large-scale grassroots movements against the companies rather than seeking to negotiate with them. These movements have not been entirely nonviolent; occasionally they have included guerrilla

warfare actions by “green armies.” Such mass mobilization contributed to the decision of the Australian-based Western Mining Corporation in 2000 to abandon its plans for developing a huge copper mine in Mindanao.

By the late twentieth century, environmentalism had become a matter of global concern. Such an awareness motivated legislation aimed at pollution control in many countries; it pushed many businesses in a “green” direction; it fostered research on alternative and renewable sources of energy; it stimulated UN conferences on global warming; it persuaded millions of people to alter their way of life; and it generated a number of international agreements addressing matters such as whaling, ozone depletion, and global warming.

The globalization of environmentalism also disclosed sharp conflicts, particularly between the Global North and South. Both activists and governments in the developing countries have often felt that Northern initiatives to address atmospheric pollution and global warming would curtail their industrial development, leaving the North/South gap intact. “The threat to the atmospheric commons has been building over centuries,” argued Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva, “mainly because of industrial activity in the North. Yet . . . the North refuses to assume extra responsibility for cleaning up the atmosphere. No wonder the Third World cries foul when it is asked to share the costs.” A Malaysian official put the dispute succinctly: “The developed countries don’t want to give up their extravagant lifestyles, but plan to curtail our development.”²⁵ The United States’ refusal in the late 1990s to ratify the Kyoto protocol, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, seemed to confirm the unwillingness of the world’s largest emitter to seriously limit those emissions and proved offensive to many of the 164 countries that had ratified it by 2006. Yet another North/South environmental issue arose over the export of hazardous wastes, generated in the rich countries, to disposal sites in the developing countries.

Beyond these and other conflicts, global environmentalism, more than any other widespread movement, came to symbolize “one-world” thinking, a focus on the common plight of humankind across the artificial boundaries of nation-states. It also marked a challenge to modernity itself, particularly its consuming commitment to endless growth. The ideas of sustainability and restraint, certainly not prominent in any list of modern values, entered global discourse and marked the beginnings of a new environmental ethic, though one based on concepts dating back to the Paleolithic era. This change in thinking was perhaps the most significant achievement of global environmentalism.

Final Reflections: Pondering the Uses of History

The end of a history book is an appropriate place to ask the fundamental question: just what is it good for, this field of study we call history? What, in short, are the uses of the past, and particularly of the global past?

At one level, philosophers, scholars, and thoughtful people everywhere have long used history to probe the significance of human experience. Does an examination of the past disclose any purpose, meaning, or pattern, or is it “just one damned thing after another”? Some sages, of course, have discerned divine purpose in the unfolding of the human story. To Saint Augustine, an early Christian thinker and writer, that purpose was the building of the “heavenly city,” while events in this world were but steps in God’s great plan. Chinese thinkers often viewed history as the source of moral lessons and related the behavior of rulers to the rise and fall of their dynasties. Europeans and others operating within the Enlightenment tradition have seen history in secular terms as a record of progress toward greater freedom or rationality in human affairs. Karl Marx viewed the past as a succession of economic changes and class struggles culminating in the creation of socialism, a secular utopia that would forever banish war, inequality, and social conflict.

Most contemporary historians are skeptical of such grand understandings of the human past, especially those that depend on some unseen hand directing the course of history to a defined end or those that reflect a particular set of values. But if “purpose” is hard to detect in the human story, some general “directions” over the long run are perhaps more evident.

One such trend lies in growing human numbers, which are linked to greater control over the natural environment as our ways of living moved from gathering and hunting, to agriculture, and most recently to industrial societies. Accompanying this broad direction in world history has been the growing complexity of human societies. Small hunting bands of a few dozen people gave way to agricultural villages of several thousands, to cities populated by tens or hundreds of thousands, to states and empires consisting of many millions. As the scale of human communities enlarged, so too did the pace of change in human affairs. In recent centuries, change has become both expected and valued in ways that would surely seem strange to most of the world’s earlier inhabitants. A final possible direction in world history has been toward greater connection among the planet’s diverse cultures and peoples. To early links among neighboring settlements or villages were later added networks of exchange and communication that operated among distant civilizations, across whole hemispheres, and after 1500 on a genuinely global level.

A word of caution, however, about finding direction in world history. None of this happened smoothly, evenly, or everywhere, and all of it was accompanied by numerous ups and downs, reversals, and variations. Furthermore, the notion of direction in history is quite different from that of progress. It is an observation rather than a judgment. One might consider growing populations, control over nature, increasing complexity, more rapid change, and global integration as great achievements and evidence of human “success.” Alternatively, one might regard them as a burden or a curse, more of a disease than a triumph. We do well in studying the past to separate as much as possible our descriptions about what happened from our opinions about those events and processes.

In addition to discovering meaning or, even more modestly, direction in history, the uses of the past have long included efforts by political authorities to inculcate national, religious, civic, patriotic, or other values in their citizens. Furious debates in recent decades about history curricula in the schools of the United States, Japan, China, and elsewhere testify to the continuing impulse to use history in this way. In democratic societies, many people also express the hope that grounding in history will generate wiser public policies and more informed and effective participation by citizens. It is not always easy to find evidence for such outcomes of historical study, for the lessons of the past are many, varied, and conflicting, and the world, as always, hovers on the knife edge of possibility and disaster. Nonetheless, advocates for historical study continue to believe that probing the past enhances public life.

On a more personal level, many people have found in the study of history endless material for musing, for pondering those matters of the heart and spirit that all of us must confront as we make our way in the world. Consider, for example, the question of suffering. History is, among other things, a veritable catalog of the varieties of human suffering. It provides ample evidence, should we need it, that suffering is a common and bedrock human experience—and that none of us is exempt. But the study of history also highlights the indisputable fact that much of human suffering has come at our own hands in the shape of war, racism, patriarchy, exploitation, inequality, oppression, and neglect.

Is it possible that some exposure to the staggering sum of human suffering revealed in the historical record can soften our hearts, fostering compassion for our own suffering and that of others? In short, can the study of history generate kindness, both at the level of day-to-day personal interactions and at the wider level of acting to repair the brokenness of the world?

For those who choose to practice kindness or to seek justice in public life—overcoming global poverty, promoting equality between men and women, seeking understanding among religious traditions, encouraging environmental sustainability—history offers some encouragement. For one thing, it provides a record of those who have struggled long, hard, and on occasion with some success. Abolitionists contributed to the ending of slavery. Colonized peoples broke free of empire. Women secured the vote and challenged patriarchy. Socialists and communists challenged the inequities of capitalism, while popular protest brought representative communist regimes to their knees in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Brave people have spoken truth to power. In short, things changed, and sometimes people changed things.

There is yet another way in which history might assist our personal journeys through life. We are, most of us, inclined to be insular, to regard our own ways as the norm, to be fearful of difference. Nor is this tendency largely our own fault. We all have limited experience. Few of us have had much personal encounter with cultures beyond our own country, and none of us, of course, knows personally what life was like before our birth. But we do know that a rich and mature life involves

opening up to a wider world. If we base our understanding of life only on what we personally experience, we are impoverished indeed.

In this task of opening up, history in general and world history in particular have much to offer. They provide a marvelous window into the unfamiliar. They confront us with the whole range of human achievement, tragedy, and sensibility. They give context and perspective to our own limited experience. They allow us some modest entry into the lives of people far removed from us in time and place. They offer us company for the journeys of our own lives. If we take it seriously, historical study can assist us in enlarging and enriching our sense of self. In helping us open up to the wider experience of “all under heaven,” as the Chinese put it, history can assist us in becoming wiser and more mature people. What more might one ask from any field of study?

Second Thoughts

What's the Significance?

neo-liberalism	Prague Spring	Islamic renewal
reglobalization	Che Guevara	Osama bin Laden/al-Qaeda
transnational corporations	second-wave feminism	global warming
North/South gap	fundamentalism	environmentalism
antiglobalization	Hindutva	

To assess your mastery of the material in this chapter, see the Online Study Guide at bedfordstmartins.com/steper/.

Big Picture Questions

- To what extent did the processes discussed in this chapter (economic globalization, feminism, fundamentalism, environmentalism) represent something new in the twentieth century? In what respects did they have roots in the more distant past?
- In what ways did the global North/South divide find expression in the twentieth century?
- What have been the benefits and drawbacks of globalization since 1945?
- Does the twentieth century as a whole confirm or undermine Enlightenment predictions about the future of humankind?
- “The twentieth century marks the end of the era of Western dominance in world history.” What evidence might support this statement? What evidence might contradict it?
- To what extent do you think the various liberation movements of the twentieth century—communism, nationalism, democracy, feminism, internationalism—have achieved their goals?
- Based on material in Chapters 21, 22, and 24, how might you define the evolving roles of the United States in the history of the twentieth century?