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Class: _____

Building a Borderless World

By Mike Kubic

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In this article, Mike Kubic, a former correspondent for Newsweek, discusses the growing trend of globalization. The term "globalization" refers to a process of communication and assimilation among people and institutions of various nations. In recent decades, numerous technological advancements have been instrumental in allowing for and hastening globalization. As you read, take notes on the effects of globalization (both negative and positive).

[1] Globalization—one aspect of which is international travel—is ancient. It started long before the 13th century, when Marco Polo took the Silk Road to China¹ and wrote about his travels in a book that introduced Europe to Oriental culture, technology, and civilizations. Still, as a household word, “globalization” is so modern that sociologists and lexicologists² differ in their definitions:



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- Wikipedia calls globalization “the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas and other aspects of culture.”
- A Swedish expert on globalization, journalist Thomas Larsson, describes it as “the process of world shrinkage, of distances getting shorter, things moving closer.”
- Sociologists Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King define globalization as “all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society.”

What all students of the phenomenon agree upon is that it is an ongoing, historic process—a development that is both vigorously promoted and rejected by many, but that is irreversibly changing many aspects of our lives.

1. Marco Polo (1254-1324) was a Venetian merchant traveler.
2. Someone who studies words as a branch of linguistics.

The most recent and most potent impetus³ for globalization was the horrific toll—an estimated 83 million dead and an \$11 trillion economic loss—that World War II cost all participants in the conflict. Coming just two decades after World War I and its almost 38 million casualties, the 1939-1945 hostilities convinced world leaders that the mutual carnage had to stop.

Chief among them was the French foreign minister Robert Schuman, who on May 9, 1950 proposed a regional integration to “make war [between France and Germany] not only unthinkable, but materially impossible.”

- [5] As the first step toward that goal, he presided over the 1951 creation of an organization that placed the continent’s most important resources under an unprecedented level of multinational control. The European Coal and Steel Community and its six members—Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Luxembourg—later participated in the founding of the European Economic Community and, eventually, the European Union (EU).

Fully established in 1993, the 27-member EU⁴ tries to live up to its motto: “United in Diversity.” The EU aims to promote common policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries, regional development, and a free movement of people, goods, services, and capital. All but two of the member countries have abolished passport requirements and any other type of border control at their mutual borders. Since 2002, 19 of them have also had a common currency, the Euro.

With a highly developed industry and a population of over 430 million, the EU had the potential to become a major superpower. The very creation of a continent-size entity whose citizens and goods can move freely across their national borders has already had a great impact. It has added enormous momentum to the worldwide economic integration and the lowering of traditional barriers for global cooperation and contacts, a process that has been increasingly underway since the end of WWII.

These government-to-government, institution-to-institution, and person-to-person interactions have been made possible by more than two dozen bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements that, in a variety of ways, have forged links among the 193 member states of the United Nations. All of the major treaties have been promoted by and include the United States, and they are changing the way life is lived on all seven continents.

The Effects of Globalization

Banks and other financial institutions were among the first to embrace globalization, with

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3. **Impetus** (*noun*) the force that makes something happen or happen more quickly than it otherwise would
 4. In the summer of 2016, the EU went from 28 members to 27, when Great Britain voted to leave the EU.

results that were not always positive. For example, removing the barriers to cross-border money movements has caused volatile capital flows that resulted in a series of financial crises in Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

[10] Another highly deleterious⁵ financial episode occurred about a decade ago, when the collapse of the poorly regulated U.S. housing market caused a global banking crisis. It became the catalyst of the worldwide Great Recession, which involved long-term economic consequences.

But in scores of other ways, globalization has been a boon to millions of people everywhere. For example:

- English has become the global lingua franca⁶—the second most popular language and all that a traveler or businessperson needs to know to communicate with millions of people all over the world. English is the dominant language on the Internet; about a third of the world's mail, telexes,⁷ and cables are in English; and so are approximately 40% of the world's radio programs.
- The Internet, which is both a product of globalization and one of its catalysts, connects multitudes of people around the world. From 2000 to 2009, the number of Internet users rose from 394 million to 1.858 billion. By 2010, more than one-fifth of the world's population had access to computers and was collectively conducting one billion Google searches every day. An estimated three hundred million Internet users read blogs, and two billion videos are viewed daily on YouTube.
- Health care is improving globally. The scientific standards that are set for the quality and safety of food, medicines, and medical equipment by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are recognized globally, and have been adopted by many countries. The FDA's experts are inspecting drug and food plants and training their native counterparts in many parts of the world, especially in China and India.
- Globalization has made tourism a popular global leisure activity. The World Health Organization estimates that up to 500,000 people are flying somewhere at any time of the day or night.
- Education has become vastly more diversified. Over 2.5 million youngsters are studying outside their home country, and the number is expected to rise to 7 million by the year 2020.

5. **Deleterious** (*adjective*) harmful or destructive

6. A language that is adopted as the common language between speakers whose native languages are different.

7. A message sent via an international system of telegraphy with printed messages transmitted and received by teleprinters using the public telecommunications network.

- Last but not least, our cuisine has become far more varied than the hot dogs and meat loaf-and-potatoes that, until the end of WWII, used to comprise the all-American menu. Fresh fruit and vegetables from all over the world are available in our supermarkets year-round. So are, in restaurants and bistros from coast to coast, such delicacies as chicken marsala, sushi, tacos, tikka tandoori and Chinese food. And the culinary gains are mutual: McDonald's 32,000 outlets and Starbucks' 18,000 outlets serve millions of customers in scores of countries abroad.

Some effects of globalization have come under severe criticism. For example, in June of 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU. The reason was protests against the Union's bureaucracy and its open border policy, which has enabled a massive influx of Middle East refugees to the old continent. The migration has also prompted Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, and Sweden to impose controls on some or all of their borders.

In the U.S., the most significant opposition to globalization has come from the trade unions and other critics of the widespread transfers of industrial operations to low labor-cost countries. According to labor statistics, between 2000 and 2007 alone, the U.S. lost a total of 3.2 million manufacturing jobs, leaving many American workers unemployed.

Overall, however, most economists agree that the gains of globalization have been truly global, and have greatly exceeded the costs. For example, the World Bank reports that, in 2009, the world's 192 million migrant workers sent home \$414 billion. A report by Oxford Economics puts the total worldwide e-commerce at \$20.4 trillion, or almost 14 percent of global sales.

- [15] In the opinion of Nobel Prize-winning economist Michael Spence, globalization has been a winner: "The massive changes in the global economy since World War II have had overwhelmingly positive effects," he has written. "Hundreds of millions of people in the developing world have escaped poverty, and more will in the future. The global economy will continue to grow—probably at least threefold over the next 30 years."

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the author's main purpose in writing this article? Cite evidence from the text in your response.

2. PART A: Which TWO of the following best identify the central themes of this article?
- A. The process of globalization depends upon peace among nations.
 - B. Globalization began with and has been most perceptibly advanced by the United States.
 - C. The most significant institutional result of globalization has been the creation of the European Union.
 - D. Globalization is a fluid, continuous process by which various nations become increasingly interconnected.
 - E. While globalization has attracted its critics, it is a largely positive force that promotes enhanced standards of living worldwide.
 - F. Increased connectedness among countries has had vastly negative effects on the economies of all countries involved.

3. PART B: Which TWO phrases from the text best support the answers to Part A?
- A. "Sociologists...define globalization as 'all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society.'" (Paragraph 1)
 - B. "Coming just two decades after World War I and its almost 38 million casualties, the 1939-1945 hostilities convinced world leaders that the mutual carnage had to stop." (Paragraph 3)
 - C. "The EU aims to promote common policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries, regional development, and a free movement of people, goods, services, and capital." (Paragraph 6)
 - D. "All of the major treaties have been promoted by and include the United States, and they are changing the way life is lived on all seven continents." (Paragraph 8)
 - E. "For example, removing the barriers to cross-border money movements has caused volatile capital flows that resulted in a series of financial crises in Europe, Asia, and Latin America." (Paragraph 9)
 - F. "'Hundreds of millions of people in the developing world have escaped poverty, and more will in the future. The global economy will continue to grow—probably at least threefold over the next 30 years.'" (Paragraph 15)
4. In Paragraph 6, the motto of the European Union is stated: "Unified in Diversity." In the context of this passage, what does this motto mean?
- A. War among EU member nations will be everlastingly impossible, given the way in which the organization places continental resources under the control of all involved nations.
 - B. Member nations will adopt certain similar ordinances to maintain peace, accord, and mutual benefit within the region without sacrificing that which makes them unique.
 - C. The 27 nations affiliated with the EU will abide by a single set of laws to govern every aspect of life in each country.
 - D. The countries associated with the EU will each bring a different set of resources and cultural commodities to the organization.
5. Which phrase best describes how the author responds to the criticism that globalization encourages companies to move jobs overseas, leaving numerous Americans unemployed?
- A. He uses facts, evidence, and commentary from respected organizations and individual to prove that this is not the case.
 - B. He points out the ease with which people can get new jobs due to the rise of e-commerce and enhanced communication technologies.
 - C. He highlights the bigger picture, emphasizing the worldwide economic gains resulting from globalization.
 - D. He stresses the wide variety of positive effects of globalization, beyond the realm of economic matters.

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. The author suggests that globalization was set off largely by efforts to prevent war between France and Germany. Do you agree? To what extent do you believe governments can modulate or control globalization?
2. Based on the information presented in the text, why does the author believe that the benefits of globalization "have greatly exceeded the costs" (Paragraph 14)? Do you agree?
3. Based on the text and your knowledge of international relations, do you think the European Union has been effective in living up to its mission?
4. Advances in technology have made it easier than ever to travel the world, communicate with people around the globe, and work remotely. In the context of this article, what are the costs and benefits of technology? In your opinion, are the positive effects of technological advances worth the problems they create? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.

5. This article places emphasis on the role of the United States in globalization, stating that each of "the major treaties have been promoted by and include the United States, and they are changing the way life is lived on all seven continents" (Paragraph 8). In the context of this article, how has America changed over time? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.