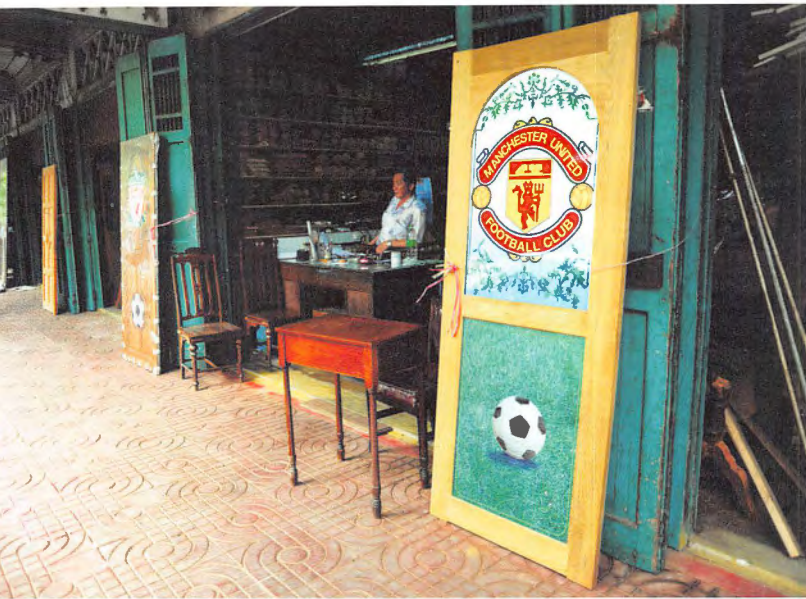


Globalization and the Geography of Networks



imageBROKER/Alamy Stock Photo

FIGURE 14.1 Bangkok, Thailand. This storefront in Bangkok has a sign for Manchester United in the foreground and one for Liverpool in the back ground. Supporters for both British football (soccer) clubs are found in Bangkok and also in much more remote Hat Yai, where I saw Manchester United fans cheering against Liverpool.

Shortly after arriving in Hat Yai to meet with a graduate student doing research in southern Thailand, we went to a simple outdoor restaurant serving delicious food. Our attention was soon drawn to a crowd focused intently on a television. Wandering over, we discovered they were watching a football (soccer) match between rivals Manchester United and Liverpool (**Fig. 14.1**).

Hat Yai is more than 6000 miles (10,000 km) from Manchester, England. It lies in a socioeconomically disadvantaged region with a substantial Malay-Muslim

population. Members of an insurgent group in Hat Yai have recently taken responsibility for bombings that, have driven away visitors and depressed outside investment. Hat Yai, then, would seem to be an unlikely place for Premier League football to attract passionate followers.

Yet passionate followers there are. It is impossible to explain this seeming oddity without considering the networks that connect different parts of the world to one another—and the impacts of those networks on people's identities. A Premier League club such as Manchester United uses corporate and telecommunications networks to advertise its brand broadly. It develops links with media organizations in many different places and promotes its players, matches, and gear on social media.

Understanding why people in Hat Yai are loyal fans of Manchester United requires understanding the networks created through globalization. In this chapter, we examine these networks and consider what they tell us about how the world works today.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

14.1 Describe how identities are changing in a globalized world.

- Personal Connectedness and the Making of Places

14.2 Identify networks and explain their role in globalization.

- Networks
- Time–Space Compression

14.3 Explain how social, information, and economic networks operate in a globalized world.

- Social Networks
- Information Networks
- Economic Networks
- The Larger View

14.1 Describe How Identities Are Changing in a Globalized World.

Gillian Rose defines **identity** as “how we make sense of ourselves.” She explains that we have identities at different scales: local, national, regional, and global identities. At each scale, place factors into our identities. We infuse places with meaning and emotions based on our experiences in those places. Globally, relatively few people are world travelers who have visited several countries overseas. And many of those who have traveled have missed out on the uniqueness of places. Tourists often visit only world cities and tourist destinations. Some tourists stay in all-inclusive resorts and never encounter the local place, except on the drive between the airport and resort. Business travelers often go only to world cities, visiting airports, office buildings, conference centers, and hotels. How, then, can a person have a global identity if he or she has not experienced the globe?

Globalization links us with other people and places, and the flow of information technology is part of that linkage. We constantly receive information about other places, whether it’s North Korea testing a nuclear device, economic instability in Venezuela, or trade negotiations with China. We may be overwhelmed by the flow of information and choose to ignore it. Even if we ignore or do not comprehend much of what we hear about the world, our sense of self and our place in the world is affected by globalization. We define ourselves by identifying with or against others at different scales, including the global scale.

In 1995, an article in *National Geographic* discussed the future of the digital age. The author argued that, as a result of technological advances and the Internet, face-to-face interaction was declining. At the same time, he claimed that people would continue to have “a need for skin,” a need to interact with other humans in person (Swerdlow 1995). As evidence, the author cited the many visitors to malls who were not there to purchase anything. Online shopping has made malls less of a destination than when the article was written. But coffee shops, restaurants, sports arenas, and performance spaces continue to draw in people.

Swerdlow’s discussion of the pull between a faceless Internet and the “need for skin” took place nine years before Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook in 2004. People with Facebook or Twitter accounts can feel connected by posting a quip or thought, and friends around the world can respond to that post immediately. But these platforms may be contributing to declining human interaction. Service organizations and clubs, like Lions Club, Rotary International, and Junior League, used to be a major way for members of a community to connect, but their membership numbers are declining.

In the early days of the digital revolution, psychologists predicted that people would have poorer social skills because of the lack of personal or face-to-face interaction. We can certainly see evidence of this in our daily lives. People often answer

phone calls or text messages when they are in the middle of in-person conversations, and some students text or multitask on laptops during geography lectures (not you, we’re sure).

Today, however, psychologists also recognize that the **networks** created through digital technology can enable greater personal interaction and opportunities for empathy, such as when people share personal experiences and ideas on Twitter, Tumblr, or a blog. Someone with medical problems or a family member can post a journal on a site such as Caring Bridge, and hundreds can follow the person’s recovery and offer words of support. A young boy with a medical condition that makes it difficult to leave home can post lip-synched videos on YouTube, develop followers around the world, and end up with recording artists stopping by to lip-sync with him. Social networks are one way individuals develop a sense of belonging and a feeling of personal connectedness to others in our global, digital age.

Personal Connectedness and the Making of Places

Twenty-one years before hundreds of millions around the world watched a live feed of the wedding of British Prince Harry and American actress Meghan Markle, the news broke that Prince Harry’s mother, Princess Diana, had died. That news traveled quickly around the world. Many felt the need to mourn for a princess they had never met in a place they had never visited. Some wanted to leave a token offering for the princess: a rose, a note, a candle, a photograph. Impromptu shrines to Princess Diana cropped up at British embassies and consulates around the world. People in Britain left more than 1 million bouquets of flowers at Kensington palace in London, where Princess Diana lived (**Fig. 14.2**).

What made people feel connected to a woman who was a royal, a member of a family that presides over a modest-sized country? Why do we relate to someone from an elite group of people of wealth and privilege? What made people want to see how her sons turned out? Why did they want to “get to know” the person Prince Harry was marrying 21 years later? Millions of people watched programs and read stories about Meghan Markle, but why?

The idea that people who do not personally know each other are linked by shared reactions to events draws from Benedict Anderson’s concept of the nation as an **imagined community** (see Chapter 8). When high-profile tragedies occur, such as the 2019 terrorist attack in New Zealand, devastating wildfires that ripped through the U.S. west coast, or the fire that ravaged Paris’ Notre Dame Cathedral in 2019, people often talk about someone they knew who was in the place (or had been at some point),



Trinity Mirror/Alamy Stock Photo

FIGURE 14.2 London, United Kingdom. Mourners gathered at Kensington Palace, Princess Diana's residence, two days after her funeral in 1997. More than 1 million bouquets were left in her memory. Notice the difference in public mourning between now and then. How many cell phones can you find in the photo?

someone who died (even those they did not know but heard about in the news), or an act of bravery or triumph that occurred in the midst of tragedy. The desire to personalize, to localize, a tragedy or even a joyous event feeds off the sense that we are all part of a community that extends far beyond where we live. The process of personalizing and localizing distant events reminds us of our shared humanity.

We live in a world where things like global superhighways of information transcend place. Even so, people continue to focus attention on territories and create places. When a death or a tragedy occurs, how do people choose a local space in which to express a personal or global sorrow? In the case of Princess Diana's death, people created hundreds of spaces to mourn the loss of a seemingly generous, if troubled, person whose life was cut short. In the case of September 11, people transformed homes, schools, public spaces, and houses of worship into spaces of reflection by creating human chains, participating in moments of silence, or holding prayer vigils for the victims.

In his book *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, geographer Kenneth Foote examined the "spontaneous shrines" created at places where loss occurred and at places that represents loss. He described these spontaneous shrines as a "first stage in the commemoration of a disaster." Foote drew from extensive fieldwork that he conducted while visiting hundreds of landscapes of tragedy and violence in the United States. His goal was to show how people mark or do not mark tragedy, both immediately with spontaneous shrines and later with permanent memorials (Fig. 14.3). He examined the struggles over whether and how to memorialize

places of loss and tragedy in the United States. After tracing and following the stories of hundreds of people and places, Foote concluded that "the debate over what, why, when, and where to build" a permanent memorial for a person or event is "best considered a part of the grieving process."

Foote's work shows that the creation of a permanent memorial (or not) in a particular place depends on whether funding is available, what kind of memorial is to be built, who or what is being remembered, whether a site is socially contested, and how people think about the site. In recent American history, major terrorist attacks have been memorialized, often with the word *closure* being used. Oklahoma City memorialized the site of a terrorist attack at the Murrah Federal Building on the five-year anniversary of the tragedy. Other tragedies, such as that experienced at the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, take longer to memorialize. Millions of people feel a personal connection to the World Trade Center site, and choosing a design and building a memorial took longer (Fig. 14.4).

The intensity of recent debates over Confederate monuments in the United States shows that memorials are not just impersonal reminders of events. They are bound with how people think about themselves and the places they inhabit. For some, a Confederate monument honors a particular sense of place and history that, they argue, should not be forgotten. For others, these monuments serve to honor the terrible practice of slavery and a dark period in American history. And the debate does not just take place among locals; people far and wide are drawn into the debate through networks that make them feel as if they have a personal stake in the outcome.

Guest Field Note Creating a Sense of Common Purpose in Columbine, Colorado

Kenneth E. Foote
University of Connecticut

I took this photo at the dedication ceremony for the memorial to the victims of the Columbine High School shooting of April 20, 1999. Columbine is located near Littleton, Colorado, in Denver's southern suburbs. The memorial, dedicated on September 21, 2007, provides a quiet place for meditation and reflection in a public park adjacent to the school. Hundreds came to the ceremony to honor those killed and wounded in the attack, one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history. After tragedies like the Columbine shootings, creating a memorial often helps to rebuild a sense of community. Public ceremonies like this can set an example for survivors who may otherwise have difficulty facing their loss in private. A group memorial helps to acknowledge the magnitude of

the community's loss and, by so doing, helps assure families and survivors that the victims did not suffer alone—that their deaths and wounds are grieved by the entire community. Memorials are important too because they can serve as a focus for remembrance and commemoration long into the future, even after all other evidence of a tragedy has disappeared.

In my research for *Shadowed Ground*, I have visited hundreds of such places in the United States and Europe. I am still surprised by the power of such places and the fact that shrines and memorials resulting from similar tragedies are tended lovingly for decades, generations, and centuries. They produce strong emotions and sometimes leave visitors—including me—in tears. But by allowing individuals to share loss, tragedy, and sorrow with others, they create a sense of common purpose.



© Kenneth E. Foote

FIGURE 14.3 Columbine, Colorado.

The mass of information coming our way each day is often overwhelming. As people filter through or ignore the flow of information, they may personalize the information and either make a connection or differentiate themselves from particular people or places. In the end, many people's identities reflect developments unfolding at the global scale. Engaging daily with global events was not possible before the age of modern telecommunications. But distant people and places may now be more present in our minds and lives. Globalization modifies how we interact with one another and how we make sense of ourselves in our world, our state, our region, and our locality.

TC Thinking Geographically

Select a memorial site that is significant locally, nationally, or globally. Describe the **site** of the memorial and explain how tragedy is represented in the memorial. Look at the photos of the memorial online and then look at a map of where the memorial is located. Zoom in and out on the map. Thinking across **scales**, explain the larger **context** of the memorial.

Author Field Note Commemorating Tragedy in New York, New York

“The 9/11 Memorial commemorates those who died in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. The wall includes the names of those who died in each tower, the first responders, those who died at the Pentagon, and those who died on each flight involved in that day’s attacks. I had given a talk in the World Trade Center just a few years earlier, and it seemed almost impossible that the great buildings crowning lower Manhattan were no longer there. But what really hit close to home was the knowledge that among the dead was Bob LeBlanc—a retired geography professor at the University of New Hampshire who had taught in the summer program at my university. His name is among the 2983 names etched into the walls around the memorial pools of the North and South Towers, the footprints of the former buildings. Beyond those who died during the 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, the memorial includes the victims of a bomb detonated in the parking garage of the North Tower on February 26, 1993. I took a photo of

Robert LeBlanc’s name, and I was reminded of Ken Foote’s research. I, like so many others, related to this tragedy not only by my own experience but through someone like me – a geography professor whom I knew and admired.”

– A. B. Murphy



Clarence Holmes Photography/Alamy Stock Photo

FIGURE 14.4 New York, New York.

14.2 Identify Networks and Explain Their Role in Globalization.

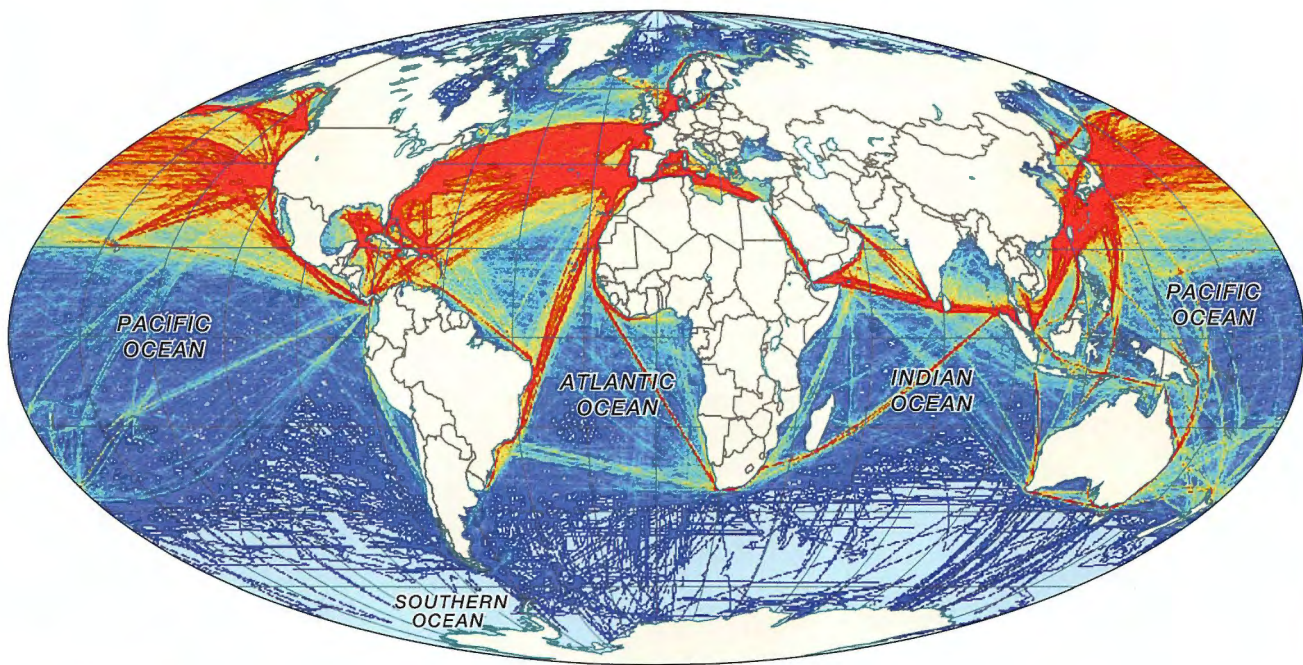
Whether you are in favor of or opposed to globalization, we all must recognize that globalization is “neither an inevitable nor an irreversible set of processes,” as John O’Loughlin, Lynn Staeheli, and Edward Greenberg put it. Andrew Kirby explains that globalization is “not proceeding according to any particular playbook. It is not a smoothly evolving state of capitalist development.” Rather, globalization is fragmented, and its flows are “chaotic in terms of origins and destinations.”

Globalization is a “chaotic” set of processes and outcomes created by people. These people might be corporate CEOs, university administrators, bloggers, electrical engineers, and protesters at a trade meeting. The processes of globalization and the connectedness created through globalization occur across scales and across networks, regardless of country borders.

The original backbone of economic globalization was trade. Trade across vast distances has taken place for centuries, and many debates over globalization continue to focus on trade. To visualize how trade fosters globalization, examine a

map of shipping routes (**Fig. 14.5**). The density of the networks on the map tells us how extensively connected the world really is. But what are the consequences of those connections? The arguments in favor of globalization were explained by economist Keith Maskus (2004), who noted that “free trade raises the well-being of all countries by inducing them to specialize their resources in those goods they produce relatively most efficiently” in order to lower production costs. He concluded that “competition through trade raises a country’s long-term growth rate by expanding access to global technologies and promoting innovation.”

The view that free trade raises the wealth of all countries underpins a set of neoliberal policies that together form the **Washington Consensus** (Chapter 10). Western international financial institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and investment banks are all part of the Washington Consensus. Together these institutions created a set of policies, including structural adjustment loans, that encouraged neoliberalism.



Source: Courtesy of: National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis, <http://ebm.nceas.ucsb.edu/GlobalMarine/impacts/transformed/jpg/shipping.jpg>, last accessed August 2008.

FIGURE 14.5 Global Shipping Lanes. The map traces over 3000 shipping routes used by commercial and government vessels. The red lines mark the most frequently used shipping lanes.

Not everyone has accepted this “consensus.” Leaders in both lower income and higher income countries have questioned the underlying assumptions of the Washington Consensus—both from the left and from the right.

Critics on the left view the Washington Consensus as part of a Western-dominated effort to get the rest of the world to privatize state-owned entities, to open financial markets, to liberalize trade by removing restrictions on the flow of goods, and to encourage foreign direct investment (Fig. 14.6). They argue that the countries of the global economic core protect their own economies while forcing the semiperiphery and periphery to open their economies. These countries are then left vulnerable to control by the core. According to Maskus, the rules negotiated for the World Trade Organization “inevitably reflect the economic interest of powerful lobbyists” in places such as the United States and the European Union. They have heightened wealth differences between more and less prosperous regions, and they have deepened the inequalities of the global system.

The traditional right long supported the Washington Consensus. However, a form of right-wing populism that is hostile to globalization and has protectionist instincts has recently gained ground. People in this camp argue that globalization has made people and places more economically vulnerable, undermining the ability of countries to control what happens within their territories, and undermining traditional national/cultural (and for some racial) norms. This perspective on globalization has increasingly entered the political mainstream. Right-wing populist parties have been winning national elections, or at least gaining support, in Europe, North America, Asia, and elsewhere. They push for stronger borders, a

my-country-first approach to trade, and the reduction in influence of international organizations.

Wherever you stand on these debates, there is general agreement that globalization has intensified over the last few decades. This means that people’s lives are increasingly tied to interconnections that exist on an unprecedented scale. In Andrew Kirby’s words, we are living “not so much in a world without boundaries, or in a world without geography—but more literally in a world, as opposed to a neighborhood or a region.” Some want to embrace this reality and others want to resist it, but understanding its geographical character and impact is clearly one of the great challenges of our time. To do that, we have to take seriously the networks around which globalization is built.

Networks

Manuel Castells defines **networks** as “interconnected nodes” without a center. A nonhierarchical network is horizontally structured, with power shared among all participants and ideas flowing in all directions. A multitude of networks exist in the world: financial, transportation, communication, kinship, corporate, nongovernment, trade, government, media, education, social, and dozens of other networks. These networks create a higher degree of interaction and interdependence among people than ever before. Deeply entrenched hierarchies in networks knit together the contemporary world and affect the character of different places and the interactions among them.

While networks have always existed, Castells argues that they have fundamentally changed since 1995. The diffusion

Author Field Note Protesting Globalization in Frankfurt, Germany

“Walking near the headquarters of the European Central Bank, I came across a modest-sized encampment of people staging an anti-globalization protest. A couple of the protesters told me this was a part of the larger ‘Occupy’ movement that started after the global financial crisis of 2008 and a follow-on debt crisis in Europe. The movement sought to draw attention to the social and economic inequalities produced by economic globalization. It turned out to be a harbinger of things to come.

Reactions to the negative impacts of globalization can be seen in everything from the rising influence of populist movements with nationalist agendas to the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom. The protesters set up their encampment at the European Central Bank because the bank manages the common currency of the European Union (EU), the euro, and sets interest rates for money it lends to commercial banks in the EU euro zone.”

– A.B. Murphy



Photo by A.B. Murphy. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

FIGURE 14.6 Frankfurt, Germany.

of information technology has created links between places in a global, yet uneven, way. Through information technology networks, Castells argues that globalization has proceeded by “linking up all that, according to dominant interests, has value anywhere in the planet, and discarding anything (people, firms, territories, resources) which has no value or becomes devalued.” Some places are linked more than others, helping to create the spatial unevenness of globalization flows and outcomes.

Time–Space Compression

Access (or lack of access) to information technology networks creates time–space compression (Chapter 12). It is sometimes shocking to realize how quickly technology has changed and diffused. In 1992, the highest-income countries had on average only 10 cellular subscribers and 2.5 Internet users per 1000 people. Now, these technologies have reached the vast majority

of people in the global economic core (see Fig. 10.3). Castells (2000) argues that the age of information technology is more revolutionary than the advent of the printing press or the Industrial Revolution. It is shrinking both time and space. He claims that we are just at the beginning of this age “as the Internet becomes a universal tool of interactive communication, as we shift from computer-centered technologies to network-diffused technologies, (and) as we make progress in nanotechnology (and thus in the diffusion capacity of information devices).”

The impacts of time–space compression vary among places, creating some places with great access to technology and others with little access to technology, typically along income lines. The **digital divide**, the difference between those who have access to technology and those who do not, both reinforces the flows of globalization and manifests in the uneven outcomes of globalization. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) collects data on the levels of digital access for different world regions. In 2018, the ITU reported

that developed (high income) countries had on average 128 mobile cellular subscriptions and 81 Internet users for every 100 people. On average, developing (low and middle income) countries had 102 mobile cellular connections and 45 Internet users for every 100 people. These figures show less of a divide than existed a decade earlier, but they still speak to the existence of a significant digital divide along socioeconomic lines. That divide looks even more dramatic if you change the scale to a more fine-grained one, such as by looking at the differences between remote parts of interior West Africa and world cities near coastal West Africa.

TC Thinking Geographically

Castells claims that the age of informational technology is more revolutionary than either the advent of the printing press or the Industrial Revolution. Explain how revolutions in information technology have made **globalization** possible. Identify one **network** in trade, migration, or politics, and determine how that network helps create **time-space compression**. Which places are more linked through the network you chose, and which places are farther apart as a result of the network?

14.3 Explain How Social, Information, and Economic Networks Operate in a Globalized World.

In this section, we examine three types of influential networks: those designed to promote a social end, those concerned with the development and spread of information, and those that promote economic exchange. Because networks are not just global, we consider each type of network at more than one scale. People have created their own local or regional networks, often in response to a network operating at the global scale.

Social Networks

Between 2014 and 2017, the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) rocked the Middle East. In both Syria and Iraq, Kurdish forces fought against ISIS, in the process freeing significant areas from Islamic State control. As we saw in Chapter 8, the Kurds are a stateless nation distributed across four different states. The conflict with ISIS helped to bring Kurds together throughout the region. In Iran, Kurds organized a major demonstration in 2014 in solidarity with their ethnic kin in Syria during the siege of Kobani (a city just south of the border with Turkey). And Iraqi Kurdistan's 2017 independence referendum was celebrated by Kurds all over the region.

Without **social networks**, it would have been impossible for Kurds to organize the kind of demonstration they did in 2014 because of state control of the formal media in Iran. Moreover, social networks played a major role in spreading news of Iraqi Kurdistan's independence referendum. Social networks did not simply promote the exchange of information. They helped to create a sense of common cause across Kurdish lands and promoted identification with Kurdistan as an imagined, if not actual political space.

Social networks, especially Facebook and Twitter, were also credited with making uprisings possible in connection with the Arab Spring (Chapter 8). In Egypt, a Google employee anonymously created a Facebook page titled "We are all Khaled Said" in honor of a young Egyptian businessman who was beaten and killed by two police officers. The page attracted 473,000 supporters, and it "helped spread the word

about the demonstrations in Egypt, which were ignited after a revolt in neighboring Tunisia toppled the government there" (Preston 2011, 1).

Rap or hip-hop music diffused among protesters who shared the Arabic language (Chapter 4). Because Islam, the predominant religion in the region, instructs followers to learn the Arabic language, most people there can speak Arabic (Chapters 6 and 7). El Général's raps, spoken in Arabic, were readily understood by Arabic speakers around the region. He rapped, "My president, your country is dead/People eat garbage/Look at what is happening/Misery everywhere/Nowhere to sleep/I'm speaking for the people who suffer/Ground under feet." The accessibility of social media helped a low-cost video of a Tunisian rapper diffuse quickly and widely.

Social media has also played a major role in the #MeToo movement, which is aimed at combating sexual harassment and assault. Starting from a relatively narrow base, the movement spread like wildfire as a hashtag on social media. Hundreds, then thousands, then millions of women, as well as some men, began sharing their stories on social media, giving rise to a movement that spread around the world. Within one year of the first tweet, 19 million tweets included #MeToo. As a result, discussions of sexual harassment and assault have entered the mainstream, from the United States, to Russia, to South Africa, to Australia.

There is, of course, a dark side to the explosion in networking through social media. Social media can also serve as a platform for spreading messages of hatred and racism, for planning terrorist attacks, and for spreading false information. The threat is not simply abstract. Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are easy to access and inexpensive. Extremist groups have used them to recruit new members and plan attacks, ranging from attacks carried out by Islamic extremists in and around Paris in 2015 to the mass murder of Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019. In response to the 2019 attack, Facebook, Twitter, Google, Microsoft, and Amazon signed a pledge to combat online extremism. Some critics believe such pledges amount to censorship, but others think there need to be some checks on how, and for what purposes, social media is used.

Before leaving the topic, it is important to note that even though social media serves as a connector, it also can produce isolation. Increasing studies show that feelings of loneliness have grown, particularly among young people who spend a great deal of time on social media. There is an irony here—one with significant geographical consequences. While social media networks can connect individuals with the wider world and promote identification with larger-scale regional and global events, they can also work against connectedness and attachment to the local scale—the places where people live.

The Impacts of Social Networks on Development Initiatives

For all the downsides of social networks, they unquestionably help in addressing the way society deals with issues and challenges. Efforts to address development challenges provide a case in point. The sizable community of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focused on development has created a web of global networks that give them considerable influence on the development landscape. And NGO development networks often counterbalance the concentration of power in governments, international financial institutions, and corporations. After the devastating 2019 earthquake in the Bahamas, NGOs from around the world cooperated to respond to the crisis. In many cases, they intervened more efficiently than the government of the Bahamas. Social media networks played a major role in making that cooperation possible.

The stated goal of many development-oriented NGOs is to include the voices of the poor and those directly affected by development. They seek to amplify the voices of those they are trying to help. To be sure, some NGOs have been criticized for falling far short of this goal. Leroi Henry, Giles Mohan, and Helen Yanacopulos (2004) argue that power relationships exist both within and between networks—often privileging the views of NGOs headquartered in the core as opposed to those in the periphery. Nonetheless, development networks now make it possible for NGOs in different parts of the world to bypass political and economic power centers. They can then work together to reach a consensus on how to achieve economic development and respond to crises. These networks also help open the door to local voices in development discussions.

Interest is growing in **participatory development**—incorporating the ideas and interests of locals in the creation of development plans. Stuart Corbridge has studied how the global push for participatory development has encouraged the government of India to enact participatory development programs. Corbridge and his colleague Sanjay Kumar describe the goal as giving the people who are directly affected by policies and programs a voice in making those policies and programs—to use local networks to structure development projects to meet local goals. Kumar and Corbridge found that “there can be no doubting the sincerity of” participatory development programs “to engage the rural poor” in India. However, they also found that local politics influence the distribution of poverty reduction schemes. Wealthier farmers and elites in rural areas tend to be the people who are most involved with development programs and hence seek to protect their interests.

Information Networks

As we discussed in Chapter 4, the diffusion of products and ideas associated with popular culture depends largely on globalized media and retail store networks, as well as associated advertising practices. Today’s media encompass much more than print, radio, and television. With technological advances, media include streaming entertainment and music sites, video games, smartphone apps, and social networks.

Through mergers and consolidations, much of the global media has come to be controlled by a few globe-spanning corporations: Alphabet (Google), Comcast, Walt Disney, AT&T Entertainment Group, New Corp, Sony, Facebook, Bertelsmann, Viacom, and a few others. These media corporations are masters of **vertical integration**. A vertically integrated corporation owns all or most of the points along the commodity chain (global production chain)—from the supply of raw materials to consumption.

Media companies compete for three things: content, delivery, and consumers (Pereira 2003). Through consolidation and mergers, vertically integrated global media companies such as the Walt Disney Company (**Table 14.1**) control content and delivery. Their ownership of production companies, radio shows, television stations, film producers, and publishers allows them to create a range of content. Then they deliver that content through ownership of streaming platforms, radio, television stations, magazines, music, video games, apps, and movies. Delivery of content also includes technological infrastructure—the technologies used for creating and sharing digital media.

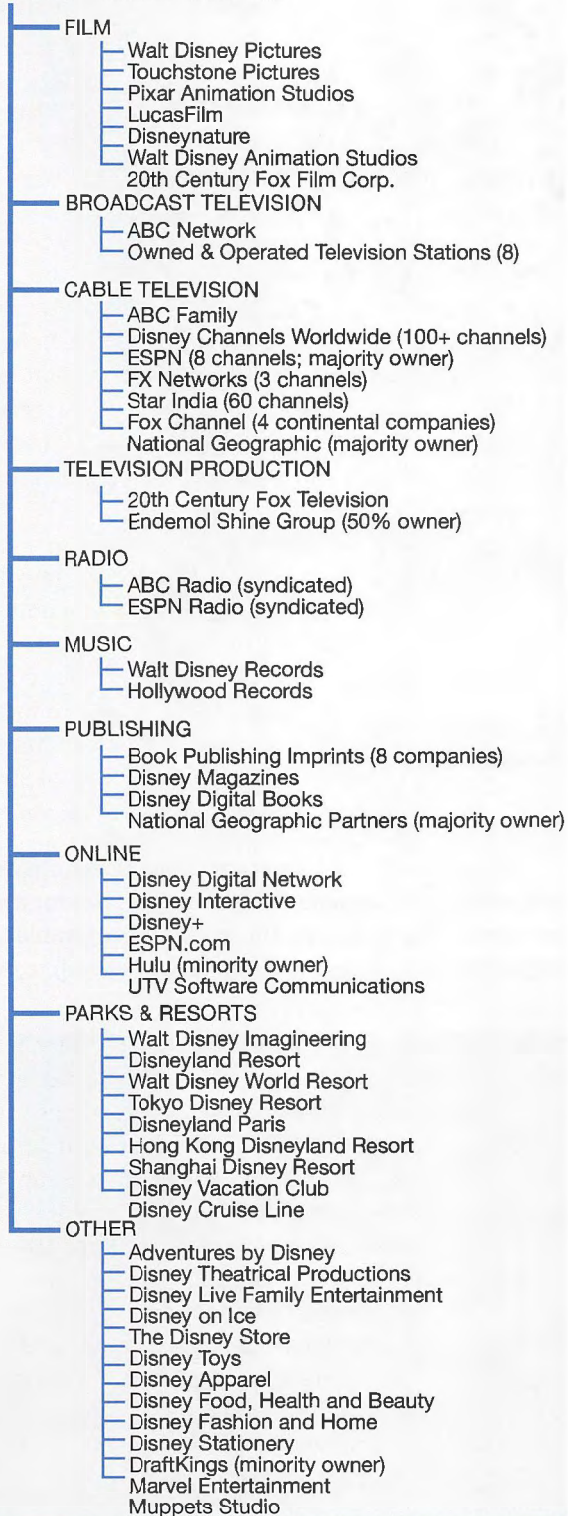
Vertical integration also helps media giants attract and maintain customers through **synergy**, or the cross-promotion of vertically integrated goods. For example, you can visit Disney World’s Animal Kingdom to catch the Festival of the Lion King, which is based on the Disney theatrical production, which was based on the Disney picture that had been previously released. And while you are waiting in line to see the theatrical version of a former Disney picture, you can play the Disney app “Where’s My Water?” on your smartphone.

Vertical integration of media changes the flow of ideas around the globe by limiting the ultimate number of **gatekeepers**, people or corporations with control over access to information. A gatekeeper can choose not to tell a story, which in turn makes the story less likely to be heard. Concern is mounting that the consolidation of media gives more and more power to fewer and fewer gatekeepers. The big media conglomerates, in this view, have become the ultimate gatekeepers.

Countering this trend is the proliferation of podcasts, online publications, and platforms that allow individuals to share their stories with millions without the endorsement of a major media company (e.g., YouTube, Reddit, etc.). These platforms reduce the control of large gatekeepers in the world today. The diversity of media outlets has the same effect, including television channels that are geared to specific populations (or markets).

TABLE 14.1

THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY



Microblogs A microblog allows individuals to post thoughts, photographs, and experiences without cost, albeit in a limited number of characters. Despite the character cap, people can spread word about a cause or a concern through hashtags. The person or organization behind each account can represent, or claim to represent, actors and networks at local,

regional, national, or global scales. As a result, microblogs have experienced extraordinary growth, including Twitter, Qzone, and Weibo. Well over 400 Chinese use Weibo, the largest microblog in the country, and many millions use Twitter, even though it is formally blocked in China. This trend can make tight gatekeeping more difficult, though the Chinese authorities keep a close eye on what happens on these microblogs.

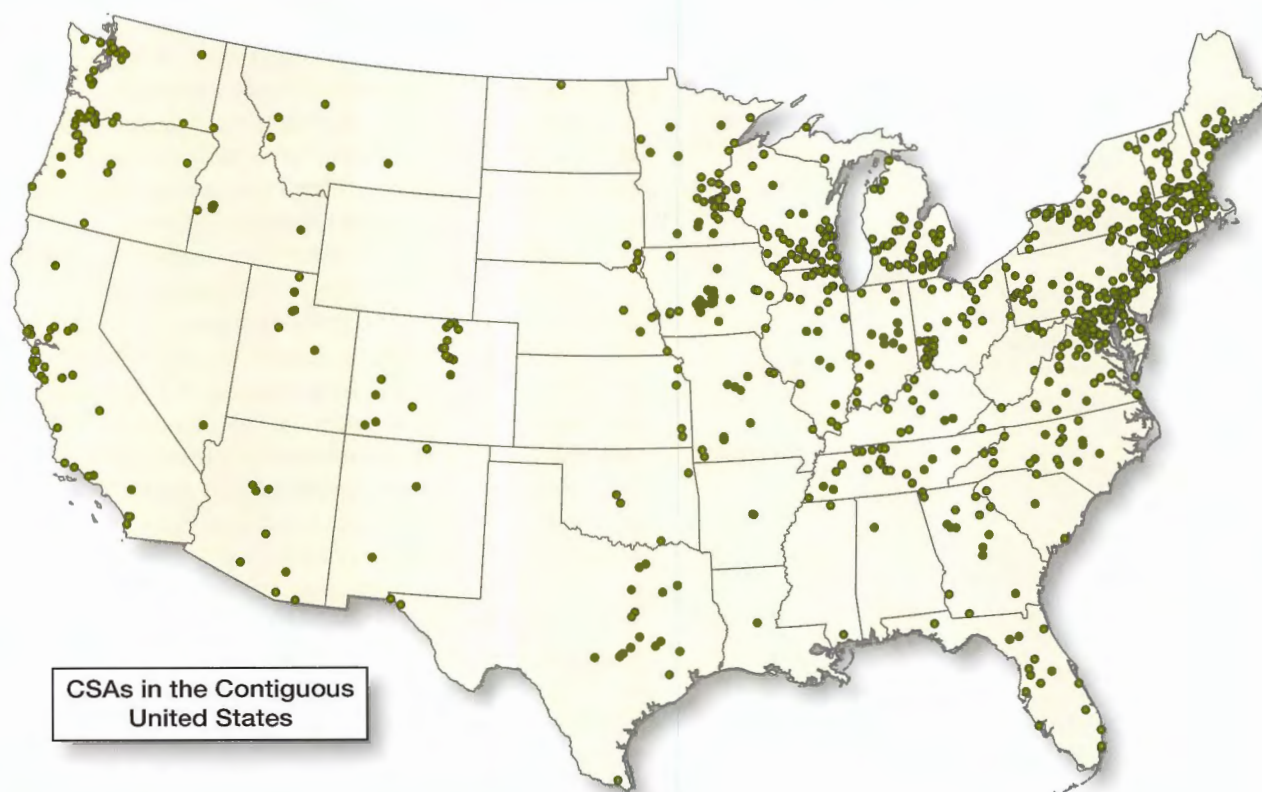
Despite censorship in some places, microblogs can challenge the dominant informational spin given to stories. This is a particularly significant factor in countries without a free press, where governments and journalists can be strong gatekeepers by choosing what stories to release or tell. For example, in July 2014, a Malaysian airliner was shot down by a surface-to-air missile by Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. Russian television reported that Ukrainian nationalists shot down the plane because they suspected President Putin was on board. However, Ukrainian and American intelligence revealed that a Russian separatist leader, who was in communication with Russian President Putin, openly stated that separatists were responsible for shooting down the plane (*The Economist* 2014). Microbloggers helped to spread the word of this finding, which undercut the official Russian description of the event.

Just like social media, microblogging has its downsides—particularly political polarization (echo chambers where people read only material that supports their own worldview) and the spread of false information (e.g. Earth is not flat despite what you may see on YouTube). Thomas Jefferson famously argued for the need to “educate and inform the whole mass of the people . . . [t]hey are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.” But educate and inform people about what? The answer is complicated given the many different interpretations of facts circulating on microblogs and elsewhere. Nonetheless, the recent growth in the number of stories that are unambiguously wrong represents a challenge. In response, there is growing awareness of the importance of fact-checking the content of microblogs and related platforms.

Economic Networks

Unlike traditional vertically integrated media, many economic networks are horizontally integrated. A horizontally integrated corporation is one that acquires ownership of other corporations engaged in similar activities. The retail industry may appear to be a large number of different companies. However, many retail companies bearing different names are in fact owned by the same horizontally integrated parent corporation.

Horizontal integration is common in clothing companies and housewares. Athleta, Old Navy, Gap, and Banana Republic are separate stores in a mall, but they are all owned by the same parent company, Gap, Inc. Likewise, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are different apps available for download, but they are all owned by Facebook, Inc. The incentive for horizontal integration is that a company that is successful in producing one good can replicate its success, share costs (such as websites), and increase profits selling at different price points or by developing slightly different varieties of the same good.



Source: Courtesy of: Local Harvest.org.

FIGURE 14.7 CSAs in the Contiguous United States. Researchers found that CSAs are more likely to be found in urban or suburban areas where people have higher levels of education and are actively involved in discussing politics.

The Agricultural Sector We often think of economic networks primarily in relation to manufacturing and service industries, but they play a role in the agricultural sector as well. Over the better part of the last century, these networks promoted the industrialization of agriculture (Chapter 11), which increased the distance between farmers and consumers. Container ships and refrigerated trucking and shipping allowed consumers in cold regions in winter months to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables grown thousands of miles away in warmer climates.

In some places, the pendulum is swinging back from large-scale industrial agriculture, however, and economic networks are playing a role in that shift. In the United States, around 2 million people act as the principal operators of farms—a figure that is as large as it is because of **community-supported agriculture** groups, known as CSAs (Fig. 14.7). CSAs began in Japan in the 1960s when a group of women, “dissatisfied with imported, processed, and pesticide-laden food, made arrangements directly with farmers to provide natural, organic, local food for their tables” (Schnell 2007). From its hearth in Japan, CSAs diffused to Europe and then to the United States, where the first CSA was in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts. By 2017, the number of CSAs in the United States had risen to over 4000, according to Local Harvest, an organization that maps CSAs to help consumers and farmers connect (Fig. 14.8).

Through a CSA, a farmer and consumers create a network where both assume risk. Consumers pay for a share of the farmer’s harvest, typically fruits and vegetables, before the growing season begins. Farmers use the cash to purchase



AP Images/Angela Major

FIGURE 14.8 Elkhorn, Wisconsin. Two workers wash lettuce in a tub at LotFotL, which stands for living off the fat of the land, a CSA farm. Subscribers can pay for their share or work on the farm to earn their share.

seeds and then plant, harvest, and deliver goods to consumers over a period of weeks during the growing season. Many CSA farmers use organic growing standards, but not all take the time to certify their land or label their products as such. With the growth in demand for organic products, however, the incentives for moving to certified organic farming are growing (Chapter 11).

The Service Sector Modern transportation and communication networks are at the heart of economic globalization. These networks make global production networks possible, and they allow for innovations and ideas to spread rapidly. They play a fundamental role in time-space compression, and they link together the fortunes of distant places.

Consider, for example, global financial networks. Globalized financial systems that influence international flows of capital, patterns of investment, and trade financing. Financial networks are so closely linked that a significant shift in the financial markets on Wall Street in New York can have almost immediate impacts in London, Tokyo, and beyond. Shifts in Chinese financial institutions and financial markets are increasingly impacting countries tied directly to China's economy through China's development loans and projects (Chapter 10).

The most important nodes in these networks are **world cities**. Indeed, one of the signal features of economic globalization is the network of highly linked world cities. In Chapter 9, we discussed the growth of world cities in the core, semiperiphery, and periphery, and the deepening of their connectedness. We considered how network analysis is used to examine levels of connectivity among world cities, based on such factors as air travel between cities and the extent of the financial and advertising networks connecting cities. Another study of world cities, produced by the Brookings Institution, identified 123 world cities and mapped them according to seven categories (**Fig. 14.9**).

Drawing on dozens of economic indicators that speak to the influence of world cities on networks, the Brookings Institution study identified a few so-called global giants in the United States (New York and Los Angeles), Japan (Tokyo and Osaka-Kobe), the United Kingdom (London), and France (Paris). Instead of developing a single hierarchy of cities below those giants (the usual approach), the Brookings study looks at different ways cities can exert broad influence. They can be centers of innovative quinary economic activity (knowledge capitals), emerging gateways, or regionally important cities. The resulting picture provides another insight into the role world cities play in global, regional, and national economic networks.

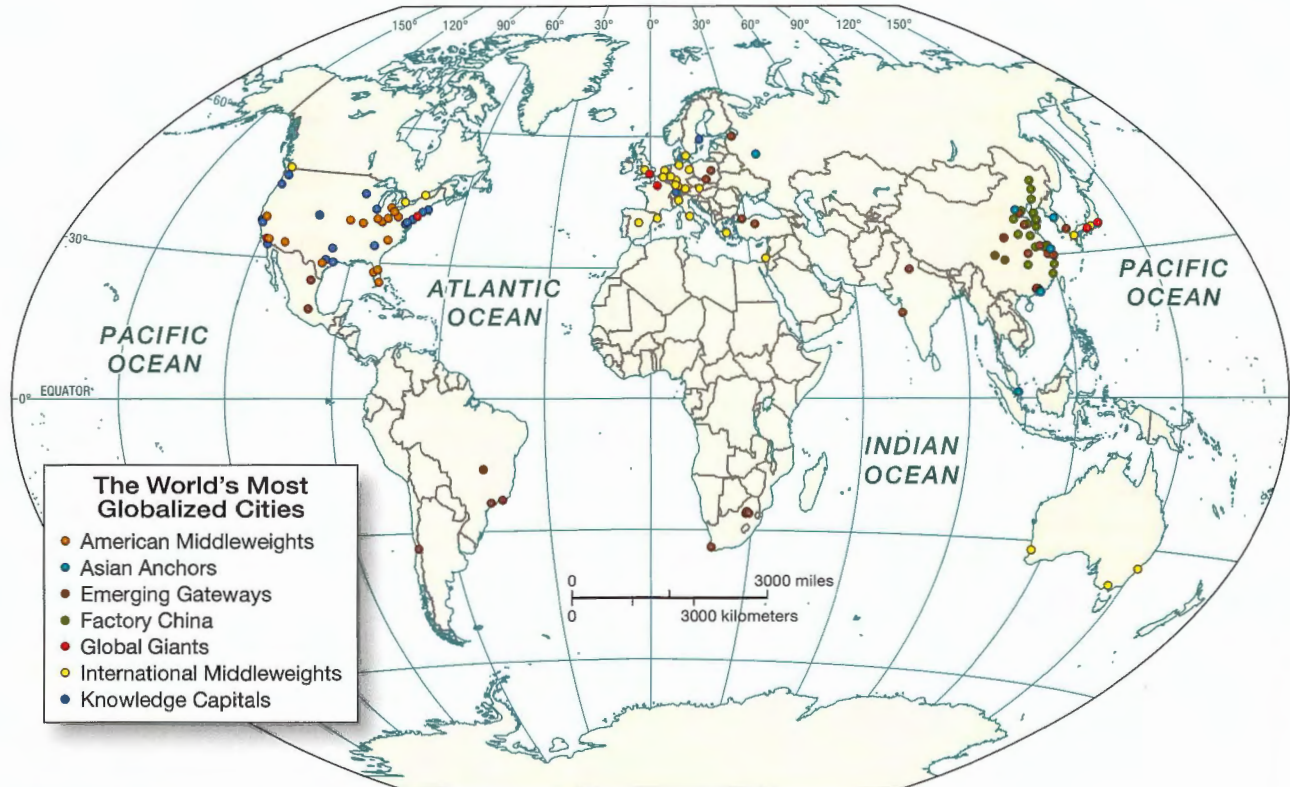


FIGURE 14.9 The World's Most Globalized Cities. The Brookings Institution used a variety of metropolitan-level economic characteristics, data on industrial structure, and indicators of competitiveness (trade, infrastructure, innovation, talent) to classify large cities into the seven categories shown on the map.

Focusing on world cities is important because they are the drivers of the networks that underpin and sustain globalization. The linkages among these cities tell us much about the spatial character of globalization (see Fig. 9.43 and 9.44). Those linkages influence not just the evolution of the world economy, but also the flow of ideas—in the process, shaping how people think about and make sense of the world around them.

The Larger View

No one can understand all the complexities that govern life on Earth. But the ideas and perspectives set forth in this text can give you insights into what it means to think geographically. That type of thinking is critical if you are to raise the types of questions that go beyond the generalizations that work against deeper understanding. Authors can treat complex issues with simplistic, often alarmist book titles like *The World is Flat* (Thomas Friedman) or *The Post-American World* (Fareed Zakaria). Books like these often start with an interesting observation and find evidence to support it, but they overlook complexities that do not support their theses.

Understanding complexities and diversity of experiences is essential to challenging simplistic stereotypes and developing a deeper understanding of how the world works.

It is important to identify the major trends that are shaping our world, but we also need to recognize the uniqueness of places. Then we might begin to understand the influence that particular uniqueness has on how major trends unfold and what they mean. Our hope is that this text has helped you think through these matters and, in the process, enhanced your awareness and appreciation of the world we call home.

TC Thinking Geographically

Think about the news you see each day on the Internet and social media. Go to the global media bias chart at: <https://www.adfontesmedia.com/>

Open the chart and analyze it – look for any media sources you use regularly for information. Go to Columbia Journalism Review’s website, Who Owns What <https://www.cjr.org/resources/?c=disney>

Pick a media company and analyze their **network** of companies. Determine how many gatekeepers control the information you use to make decisions and understand your world, and analyze the bias of the sources in your information network.

Summary

14.1 Describe How Identities Are Changing in a Globalized World.

1. People have identities that reflect their relationships to people and events at different scales. In the wake of globalization, the global scale has increasingly become a focus of identity. We are constantly made aware of what is happening at the global scale, and the global scale affects our lives in multiple ways.
2. Despite the emergence of communication networks that transcend places, people continue to focus attention on territories and create specific places—in their minds and in tangible ways. For example, in the face of death or tragedy, people often construct memorials that reflect their thoughts about what happened and its significance. Different views of these matters can lead to conflicts over where memorials should be located and what they should look like.

14.2 Explain Networks and Their Role in Globalization.

1. Over the past 70 years, globalization has been advanced by the so-called Washington Consensus, which championed neoliberal policies designed to promote free trade. The consensus is increasingly being challenged. The challenge from the left comes from those who see it as part of a Western-dominated effort to get the rest of the world to privatize state-owned entities, open financial markets, liberalize trade by removing restrictions on the

flow of goods, and encourage foreign direct investment—with the primary benefits flowing to the global economic core. The challenge from the right is based on the idea that globalization has weakened the ability of states to control what happens inside their borders and has undermined traditional national/cultural (and for some racial) norms.

2. At the heart of globalization are a wide variety of networks. Because these networks have become so widespread and are having such an enormous impact on people and places, some argue that they are bringing about changes that are even greater than the changes that occurred following the invention of the printing press or the arrival of the Industrial Revolution.
3. A major divide in access to information technology—called the digital divide—is a product of the proliferation of cyberspace networks. These networks link some places more than others, helping to create the uneven outcomes of globalization.

14.3 Explain How Social, Information, and Economic Networks Operate in a Globalized World.

1. Social networks play a major role in the organization of socio-political events (e.g., protests), the coordination of responses to disasters, the implementation of development initiatives, and the dissemination of information about important developments and causes. These networks can also make it easier to spread messages of hatred and racism, to plan terrorist attacks, and to spread false information (fake news). Ironically, even though they

connect people, there is growing evidence that they also lead to feeling of isolation and loneliness.

2. Information networks influence what people hear about and how different circumstances and events are described. Mergers and consolidations of media giants through vertical integration have reduced the number of information gatekeepers, leading to concern that more and more power rests with fewer and fewer gatekeepers. Microblogs represent a counter-trend, and these now play

an important role in the information environment. But microblogs can also be platforms for spreading false or misleading information, and they can promote ideological and political polarization.

3. Economic networks are at the heart of globalization. They affect the agricultural sector as well as the manufacturing and service sectors. Global cities play an important role in these networks, giving them disproportionate economic influence and power in the contemporary world.

Self-Test

14.1 Describe how identities are changing in a globalized world.

1. True or False: The development of digital communications is rapidly displacing the desire for face-to-face interaction.

2. A tragic event that draws people together from distant places is an example of:

- a. an imagined community.
- b. participatory development.
- c. vertical integration.
- d. horizontal integration.

3. Each of the following was primarily a product of the modern telecommunications revolution except:

- a. the embrace of a more global identity by an increasing number of people.
- b. the personalization of events occurring in faraway places.
- c. the development of strong attachments to the places where people live.
- d. the growth in awareness of events occurring in distant places.

14.2 Explain networks and their role in globalization.

4. The roots of globalization can be traced to:

- a. trade over substantial distances.
- b. conflicts between world regions.
- c. the invention of the telephone.
- d. the rise of e-commerce.

5. The Washington Consensus refers to a Western-dominated effort:

- a. to restrict the flow of goods to benefit Western interests.
- b. to reduce the digital divide among peoples around the world.

c. to promote a global trading network with the United States as its central node.

d. to promote the global privatization of state-owned entities and liberalize trade.

6. Which of the following is an example of time-space compression in the modern world?

- a. a migrant caravan moving north from Central America to the United States
- b. a website making it possible to order products and have them delivered the next day
- c. an intensification of flooding along a coast in response to sea-level rise
- d. a switch from gasoline-powered to hybrid automobiles

14.3 Explain how social, information, and economic networks operate in a globalized world.

7. The involvement of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in development initiatives:

- a. usually means that core-periphery power relations are removed from the picture.
- b. typically means that international financial institutions are also part of the picture.
- c. in many cases helps to foster participatory development.
- d. usually occurs only when governments have already taken steps to address problems.

8. True or False: Many major media organizations have become more vertically integrated.

9. The most important nodes in global service networks are:

- a. microbloggers.
- b. seats of government (capitals).
- c. global cities.
- d. centers of secondary economic activity.