Global News Project

Patrick Maxwell

Lebanon Valley College

GLB 101: Magnitudes and Dimensions of Globalization

Dr. Dolan

20 November 2015

**Global News Project: Transnational Issues**

**Introduction: What are transnational issues?**

Transnational issues, as defined by Karen Mingst and Ivan Arreguín-Toft, are problems impacting the globe that transcend the concept of national borders. In specific, the three transnational issues in this analysis of global news articles include the environment, global health, and transnational crime (Mingst & Toft, 2014). Manfred Steger, author and editor of “The Global Studies Reader” (2013), asserts in the first line of the introduction that, “We live in an unprecedented age of connectivity brought about by globalization” (p. 1). Specifically, when Steger mentions the term “connectivity,” he references the interdependency and interconnectedness currently exhibited by states in the international system. Steger continues, articulating that despite the prosperity accompanied by this rapid globalization, “’global problems’ such as transnational terrorism, pandemics like AIDS and H1N1, the global financial crisis, the Eurozone debt crisis, the planetary climate change, and the food crisis in the Global south” make evident some of the negative externalities associated with the process of globalization (2013, p. 1). In some instances, the interconnectedness of the world has directly led to these transnational issues; for instance, international transportation of living creatures carrying communicable diseases, the use of expansive communication technologies to recruit international terrorists, or the inclined use of international shipping vehicles leading to increased CO2 emissions and ergo climate change. However, the cause of these issues, in this instance, also serve as the solutions – interdependency among states leads to the formation of intergovernmental organizations devoted to stopping climate change; nongovernmental organizations emerge dedicated to fighting the spread of disease; and interstate alliances and treaties develop with the goal of ending global terrorism. Given these points, this paper will utilize seventeen news sources in order to locate current examples of transnational issues and solutions around the world with the goal of effectively analyzing some implications resulting from the magnitudes and dimensions of globalization.

**The Environment, Climate Change, and Protecting the Global Commons**

Climate change, a pattern of increasing temperatures exhibited in the environment from growing carbon dioxide levels as a result of increased fossil fuel consumption, epitomizes the definition of a transnational issue. Labeled as a public good, the entire globe shares one environment and therefore the responsibility of protecting it. China, one of the largest consumers of fossil fuels, was recently featured in the news, specifically in *Foreign Policy* magazine, for their transition from a one-child to two-child policy. The article cited the Chinese Communist Party’s intentions behind changing the number of children as an attempt to increase the number of consumers in the country, ergo increasing the consumption of fossil fuels (Sehgal, 2015). One externality resulting from the changing climate is the depletion of valuable commodities. For instance, the *Inter Press Service* *News Agency* published an article examining the shortages of drinking water plaguing the region of Pakistan-in particular, Peshawar. In addition to climate change, the article cites misuse of drinking water as another source for this dire shortage (Yusufzai, 2015). Taking a more satirical stance, Dave Bry of *The Guardian* explains that the climate change has also led to the proliferation of a thriving mosquito population well into the fall season. Bry explains that these mosquitos not only keep him and his wife from sleeping, they also potentially carry with them deadly diseases (Bry, 2015). These articles demonstrate the effects of climate change as a transnational issue.

The overconsumption of fossil fuels in China does not strictly impact the citizens of China – instead, the population in Pakistan is left to fight for the little amount of clean drinking water. Peter Christoff and Robyn Eckersley explain this phenomenon in their selected writing on “An Overheated Planet” explaining that, “the central injustice of global warming [is that] those least responsible for generating the emissions that produce global warming are likely to suffer its worst direct and indirect impacts” (2013, p.276). Given that the environment is a global public good, it is the responsibility of the entire world to take active solutions toward stopping and ultimately reversing the effects of climate change. Both the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* (CBC) and *Le Monde diplomatique* posted articles related to the United Nations’ efforts to fight climate change. *Le Monde diplomatique* featured an article on the United Nations’ work on financing the necessary funds to help developing countries reduce the impact they have on the environment (Perez, 2015). In the meantime, the *CBC* discussed the upcoming UN climate change conference and the successfulness of the world to make progress towards reducing greenhouse gas without sacrificing growth of the economy (Harris, 2015). Lastly, the *International Policy Digest* reported the pull and push factors effecting the development and emissions targets in 23 of Africa’s countries affected by the newly formed Intended Nationally Determined Contributions funded by the UNECA (Nkem, 2015). Although the formation of solutions and groups working toward solutions serves as a step in the right direction, the largest issue impacting climate change solutions is the struggle for climate governance. As Christoff and Eckersley disclose, much of the climate change solutions fall under the United Nations. However, Ramesh Thakur and Thomas Weiss would most likely argue that these solutions will fall into the fifth gap of global governance, the compliance gap, stating, “The ‘compliance gap’ may be usefully divided into implementation (including monitoring) and enforcement gaps… Even if an institution exists, or a treaty is in effect, or many elements of a working regime are in place, there is often a lack of political will” (2013, p. 36). In essence, one leading cause in the failure to mitigate the effects of climate change rests not in finding solutions, but rather the implementation and enforcement of these solutions when no true global governance exists.

**Global Health and Communicable Diseases**

As a result of the interconnectedness of nation-states in the international system, the spread of communicable diseases like malaria or HIV has morphed into a transnational issue; however, with the collaboration of doctors around the globe, leading medical research capitalized on the ease of global collaboration to find life-saving cures and preventive measures to stop the spread of these deadly illnesses. *CNN* detailed one example of progress toward a healthier world in their piece on the polio eradication efforts by Nigeria. Through detailed sewer waste monitoring, the country is able to claim that they have achieved over a year without any documented cases of polio (Hellmann, 2015). Additionally, *NPR* praised researchers on discovering an additional method to kill the malaria parasite which employs a specialized drug aimed at killing the mosquitos that transmit the disease (Beaubien, 2015).

In other news, the *New York Times* revealed that progress has been documented in the fight against African sleeping sickness as researchers were able to decrease the number of infected cattle by 75 percent, leading to a direct decline in the number of infected humans (McNeil, 2015). Also, the *Agence France Presse* indicated that a study published in the Lancet medical journal posited that children whose mothers were HIV-positive, if given anti-AIDS drugs prior to breastfeeding, exhibited decreased risks of contracting the virus (Mukherjee, 2015). Although the majority of the global health news focuses on the developing regions of the world, the intergovernmental organization – the WHO – was cited in a *euronews* article on their recent report that processed meats, like bacon and ham, were as likely to cause cancer as tobacco and asbestos (Anon., 2015, *Meat cancer report*).

Communicable diseases and the spread of diseases around the globe dates back to Christopher Columbus and the sailors carrying diseases like smallpox, influenza, and diphtheria to the Native Americans. Since then, the spread of disease and efforts to trace, monitor, and control global health pandemics have been documented – for example, the spread of the plague aboard an Italian merchant ship in 1937, or the Spanish influenza in 1519 (Chanda, 2007, p. 149). The importance of controlling the outbreak of communicable diseases increases as the urbanization, particularly in the developing regions (slums), continues. As Mike Davis explains, slum growth has outpaced urbanization since 1970. A heightened population density in the developing regions coupled with a lack of proper health care could spell disaster for the rest of the world if slums became breeding grounds for communicable diseases (Davis, 2006, p. 247).

**Transnational Crime**

Transnational crime, in this analysis, pertains to two particular crimes. First, the three forms - human trafficking, human smuggling, and narco-trafficking - of illegally transporting goods or human beings across borders to sell in foreign markets. Human trafficking has become a central point of focus among human rights activists, and the *Christian Science Monitor* recently published the story of a woman’s journey from the Philippines to the U.S., where she was forced into domestic servitude. After being rescued, this woman was able to rebuild her life in the U.S. and has since joined a Migrant Workers Association dedicated to the rehabilitation of trafficked Filipino women (Khadaroo, 2015). In the wake of the recent Syrian refugee crisis, there has been an increase in human smuggling as refugees desperately attempt to make it safely into Europe. The *Global Post* published a story aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of human trafficking featuring Greek experts and policy change by the Greek government (Vlachou, 2015). Meanwhile, *BBC* detailed the horrors of unsuccessful smuggling attempts, as a lorry containing 20 to 50 migrant bodies was found abandoned on a motorway between the border of Austria and Hungary (Anon., 2015, *Migrant crisis*). In addition to the trafficking of human beings, transnational crime includes narco-trafficking. In Lebanon, a Saudi prince and nine other individuals were charged with drug trafficking after being caught in a drug bust, as reported the *World Affairs* journal (Anon., 2015, *Lebanon charges*). Nayan Chanda argues in “Slaves, Germans and Trojan Horses,” that slavery is the oldest trade. As enslavement shifted to trafficking, the excitement and enchantment of leaving poverty for prosperity tricked the migrants into dangerous transportation situations and immoral working conditions – dating back to the idea of the European Dream markets to Chinese workers (Chanda, 2007, p. 150). “The Global Studies Reader” also offers insight into the potential for nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations and collective action to affect social change, as Women’s organizations have formed transnational feminist networks to change the marginalization of women across the globe (Moghadam, 2013, p. 103).

Second point of analysis, transnational terrorism, involves a group of nonstate actors seeking to make political statements through the attack on and murder of innocent civilians. Recently, the Islamic State, a terrorist organization located in Syria, Iraq, and the Levant, has taken credit for two terrorist attacks. First, the *Economist* details the tragic events of twin bombs in Beirut, Lebanon as the terrorist group allegedly targeted the area due to the high Shia and Hezbollah population (Anon., 2015, *Islamic State claims*). Second, the *Wall Street Journal* documented the multiple attacks of soft targets in Paris, and the world leaders’ pledge to forcefully respond to the terrorist group, including intensified airstrikes (Lee, Barnes, & Entous, 2015). Comparable to the use of media in the Arab spring, the victims of trafficking and the victims of terrorism are memorialized on various social media sites, defying the monopoly global news sources once held on censoring news. Moreover, social media sites are being utilized to form collective action groups calling for justice for the dead and safety for the refugees (Schattle, 2012, p.77).

**Conclusion: Magnitudes and Dimensions of Globalization**

The world is undoubtedly more connected now than it ever was before – and globalization scholars agree, the globalization process is irreversible. As time progresses, the extent to which global citizens become dependent upon one another to solve transnational issues will continue to increase rapidly. Through all aforementioned current events and examples of global problems, one point is evident – the level of cooperation will directly impact the successfulness with which this new globalized world combats and solves these transnational issues.

**Bibliography**

Anonymous. (2015, November 13). *Islamic State claims twin bombs in Beirut.* Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21678490-jihadist-group-attacks-hizbullah-stronghold-islamic-state-claims-twin-bombs

Anonymous. (2015, November 11). *Lebanon charges Saudi prince with drug trafficking.* Retrieved from http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/id=73874

Anonymous. (2015, October 27). *Meat cancer report: fear and confusion.* Retrieved from http://www.euronews.com/2015/10/27/report-linking-meat-to-cancer-causing-fear-and-confusion/

Anonymous. (2015, August 27). *Migrant crisis: Grim find of bodies in Austria lorry.* Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34073534

Beaubien, J. (2015, October 30). *Researcher plot the deat of P. Falciparum: The malaria parasite.* Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/10/30/453151353/researchers-plot-the-death-of-p-falciparum-the-malaria-parasite

Bry, D. (2015, November 13). *Thanks to claimate change, the future looks awfully warm – and very itchy.* Retrieved from http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/13/thanks-to-climate-change-the-future-looks-awfully-warm-and-very-itchy

Chanda, N. (2007). “Slaves, germs, and Trojan horses,” in *The Global Studies Reader* (Steger: Oxford University Press, 2015), pages 149-175.

Christoff, P. & Eckersley, R. (2013). “An overheated plant,” in *The Global Studies Reader* (Steger: Oxford University Press, 2015), pages 276-304.

Davis, M. (2006). “The urban climacteric,” in *The Global Studies Reader* (Steger: Oxford University Press, 2015), pages 239-248.

Desmond-Hellman, S. (2015, October 26). *Ending polio: ‘We’re on the verge of making history.’* Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/22/opinions/world-polio-day-ending-polio/

Harris, K. (2015, October 30). *United Nations finds ‘new era’ of global ambition on climate change.* Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/climate-change-greenhouse-environment-1.3295340

Khadaroo, S. (2015, November 2). *Trafficking: One woman’s journey from Staten Island slavery to her own boss*. Retrieved from http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2015/1102/trafficking-one-woman-s-journey-from-Staten-Island-slavery-to-her-own-boss

Lee, C., Barnes, J., and Entous, A. (2015, November 15). *World leaders pledge strong response to Paris attacks.* Retrieved from http://www.wsj.com/articles/obama-erdogan-pledge-joint-response-to-islamic-state-menace-1447587892

McNeil, D. (2015, November 9). *New treatment slows an epidemic of sleeping sickness.* Retrieved from http://www.euronews.com/2015/10/27/report-linking-meat-to-cancer-causing-fear-and-confusion/

Mikherjee, I. (2015, November 19). *Anti-HIV drug for infants blocks virus in breastmilk, study says.* Retrieved from http://www.afp.com/es/news/3788048/

Mingst, K. & Arreguin-Toft, I. (2014). *Essentials of international relations*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Nkem, J. (2015, November 2). *Is INDC changing Africa’s climate focus?* Retrieved from http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2015/11/02/is-indc-changing-africas-climate-focus/

Perez, D. (2015, September 17). *Claimate change: Two funds, same money.* Retrieved from http://mondediplo.com/blogs/climate-change-two-funds-same-money

Schattle, H. (2012). “Global media, mobilization, and revolution: The Arab spring,” in *The Global Studies Reader* (Steger: Oxford University Press, 2015), pages 70-89.

Sehgal, K. (2015, November 10). *The real reason for China’s two-child policy: Millions of new consumers.* Retrieved from http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/11/10/the-real-reason-for-chinas-two-child-policy-millions-of-new-consumers/

Thakur, R., & Weiss, T. (2011). “Framing global governance, five gaps,” in *The Global Studies Reader* (Steger: Oxford University Press, 2015), pages 27-40.

Valentine, M. (2005). “Globalizing women: Transnational feminist networks,” in *The Global Studies Reader* (Steger: Oxford University Press, 2015), pages 103-110.

Viachou, A. (2015, October 26). *Greek experts voice concerns over alarming human trafficking in refugee crisis.* Retrieved from http://globalpost.com/article/6675760/2015/10/26/greek-experts-voice-concerns-over-alarming-human-trafficking-refugee

Yusufzai, A. (2015, November 15). *Drinking water shortages plague Pakistan region.* Retrieved from http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/11/drinking-water-shortages-plague-pakistan-region/