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# Advancing Global Citizenship in America

**T**he concept of global citizenship is not new. It has appeared throughout human history in civilizations across the world. For example, prior to the 5th century BCE, the earliest Upanishad texts of India used a Sanskrit phrase, *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, to describe the world as one family (Yogapedia, undated). In the western world, during the 4th century BCE, the Greek philosopher Diogenes declared himself to be a citizen of the world. A hundred years later, Stoic elaboration on Diogenes's cosmopolitanism introduced concepts of universal morality. Since then, the ways in which human societies have organized themselves have changed numerous times. The world's population has also increased tremendously, especially since 1900, from 1.6 billion to more than 7.5 billion in 2021. And yet, modern international legal frameworks are linked to the ancient Stoic idea of upholding individual human rights and punishing those responsible for crimes against humanity (Langran and Birk, 2016). In the 20th century, as nation-states remained the dominant form of political organization, the idea that citizens across the world shared a global consciousness emerged as the

basis for global citizenship movements, premised on the idea that, with enough people behind it, social and economic justice held promise for ending global poverty and championing ecological sustainability.

We view global citizens as having informed concern for people and events beyond their national boundaries, guided by self-interest (for example, to benefit from the mutually beneficial nature of international trade or external help when needed, such as on the war on terror), as well as empathy and altruism (for example, humanitarian relief to refugees and those stricken by disasters).<sup>1</sup> Global citizenship is manifested individually but also collectively when it is reflected in a country's behavior on global engagement.

The state of globalization today makes the concept of global citizenship more relevant than it has ever been (Heater, 2004). Although *globalization* describes the effects of increasing international openness and interdependence, *global citizenship* describes a mode of dealing with this phenomenon, harvesting its benefits, and working collaboratively to deal with its challenges. Globalization is characterized by freer flows of goods, capital, and services and by the information and perceptions that accom-

pany market exchanges; the spread of ideas, information, images, and people; and the diffusion of similar government policies across different countries (Gygli et al., 2019). These freer movements lead to an “intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 1990, p. 64). Across social, economic, and political dimensions, these global and local happenings both produce great benefits and raise daunting challenges. Globalization has enriched societies materially, culturally, and intellectually, although these gains have not been distributed uniformly, and has also disrupted longstanding economic, political, and social arrangements, sometimes painfully.<sup>2</sup> The historically unparalleled growth in production and consumption that globalization has facilitated has also presented a grave and growing risk to the sustainability of life. These diverse effects of globalization on America have, in turn, affected how global citizenship is viewed in the United States.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization—a United Nations (UN) agency that promotes international health—declared a global pandemic: coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) (World Health Organization, 2021). The high degree of global interconnectedness became apparent when the disease, whose origins lay in Wuhan, China, spread to every continent. Besides highlighting one of the downsides of globalization—the rapid spread of disease—COVID-19 has triggered accusations across and within countries about negligence in responding to the outbreak, provoked a spike in inward-looking rhetoric, and led to a rise in xenophobia and discrimination against certain groups. The sudden worldwide increase in demand for critical medical equipment resulted in shortages that have been

### Abbreviations

BCE	before common era
CAP	Center for American Progress
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
GCE	global citizenship education
GDP	gross domestic product
TAA	trade adjustment assistance
UN	United Nations

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In recent years, efforts have grown in the United States to dial back globalization, slow the pace of change, build walls, erect tariff barriers, reject regional or global standards, and scale back foreign commitments. The COVID-19 pandemic is only likely to amplify these attempts.

further exacerbated by global supply chain disruptions. There have been calls for reducing foreign dependence and increasing local production of critical supplies. At the same time, the sharing of knowledge among the world's scientists to understand and combat the virus has grown; cooperative arrangements have formed across the globe among governments and pharmaceutical and research institutions to treat the disease and develop a vaccine; and there have been efforts to raise funds to ensure that vaccines and cures are widely available.

Even before COVID-19, globalization had begun encountering headwinds among Americans. International trade, immigration, and global engagement more generally have long enjoyed majority support in the United States. But in the face of diffused gains, this support has been offset by a more aroused and organized minority of opponents, on topics of trade, immigration, security alliances, and public health cooperation. In recent years, efforts have grown in the United States to dial back globalization,

slow the pace of change, build walls, erect tariff barriers, reject regional or global standards, and scale back foreign commitments. The COVID-19 pandemic is only likely to amplify these attempts. As a consequence, Americans are likely to question the benefits of global engagement, which global citizenship fosters.

In this Perspective, we examine the evolution of American attitudes toward globalization and various forms of international engagement. Concerted international action is required to tackle the shared challenges of climate change, environmental sustainability, pandemic disease, international security, and economic growth. This kind of collective action requires a degree of solidarity among people across national boundaries, a sense of common destiny and shared responsibility as expressed in the concept of global citizenship. It also requires that these attitudes be reflected in national policies because nation-states are, and will continue to be, the essential building blocks of any world order. We therefore examine why global citizenship

is important and how it can be fostered. We seek to understand how Americans consider and value global issues and explore ways of promoting global citizenship across the political spectrum.

Although our Perspective would be of natural interest to those already committed American internationalists who may be concerned about the erosion of U.S. support for global engagement, we also seek to persuade skeptics that this may be in their personal, as well as the national, interest.

## Globalization and the Human Condition

For most of human existence, most people have been poor—many extremely poor, lacking even reliable food and shelter (Roser, 2019). This began to change, gradually at first, within the societies in which the Industrial Revolution took hold. Progress advanced into the Machine Age in the early 20th century. During this time, the British economist John Maynard Keynes observed that “[an] inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in bed, the various products of the whole Earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep” (Keynes, 2019). This initial wave of globalization was also marked by periodic political and economic crises that culminated in two world wars and the Great Depression.

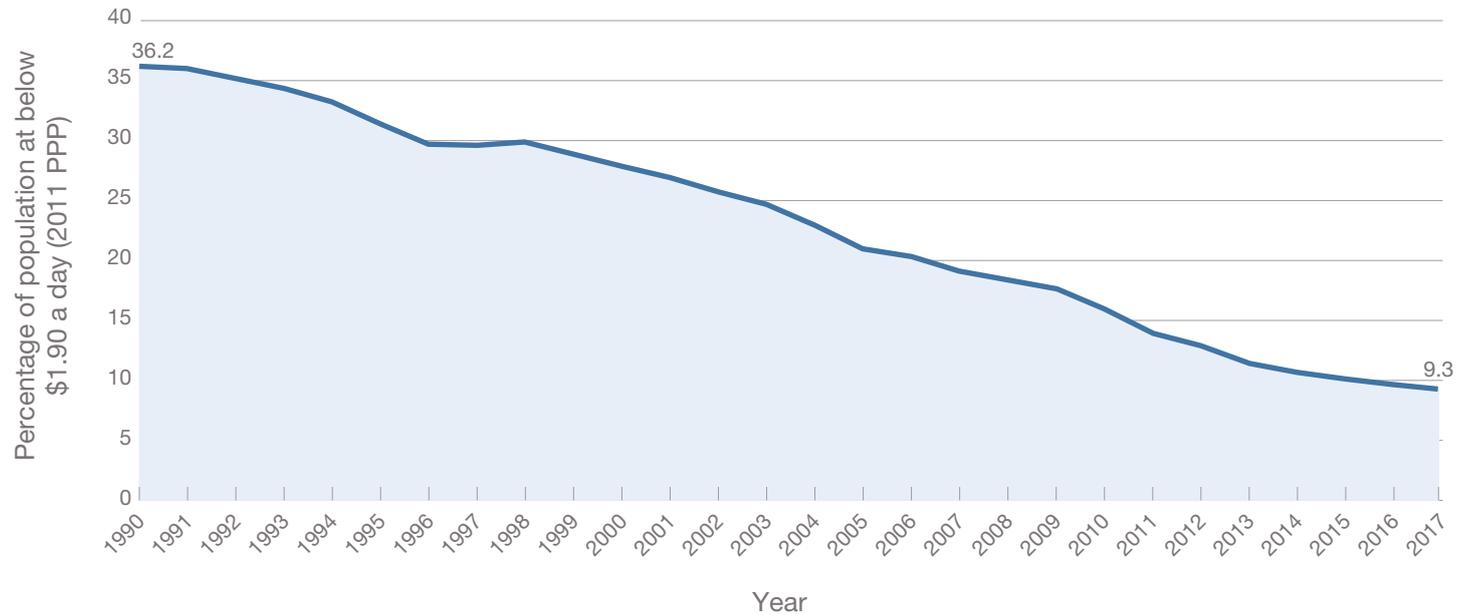
A second wave of globalization followed the Second World War, this time firmly based on two widely accepted norms of international behavior: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s territory (nonaggression), and thou shalt open thy markets to all equally (free or at least freer trade). These

norms were buttressed by numerous new institutions, largely crafted and backed by the United States, including the UN; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and the Bretton Woods agreement that gave rise to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (which has since become the World Trade Organization).

This second wave of globalization has been marked by the expansion of free markets, global governance regimes, countries ruled by democratic governments, and recognition of the value of neighborly relations. Since 1945, there have been no wars between major powers and very few between smaller states (Mueller, 2009; Koehrsen, 2019). The subsequent seven-plus decades have seen almost continuous economic growth, dramatically reducing global poverty and lifting nearly half the world’s population into the middle class. The percentage of the world population living in extreme poverty, on less than \$1.90 (adjusted for purchasing power parity) per day, fell from about 63 percent in 1950 to 9.6 percent in 2015 (Roser, 2019).<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 illustrates the sharp decline in global extreme poverty, in which a billion people moved out of extreme poverty over the most recent three decades.

Over the same period, coordinated efforts across international organizations, national governments, and civil society have played a role in a 58-percent decline in child mortality (Sharrow et al., 2018) and a 43-percent decline in maternal mortality (Alkema et al., 2016).<sup>4</sup> The global literacy rate increased from 74 percent in 1990 to 87 percent in 2020 (Carr-Hill and Pessoa, 2008; World Bank, 2020b). In addition, there have been several health effects. Two hundred years after its vaccine was developed, the eradication of smallpox was made possible only by a global effort coor-

FIGURE 1  
Global Poverty by Percentage



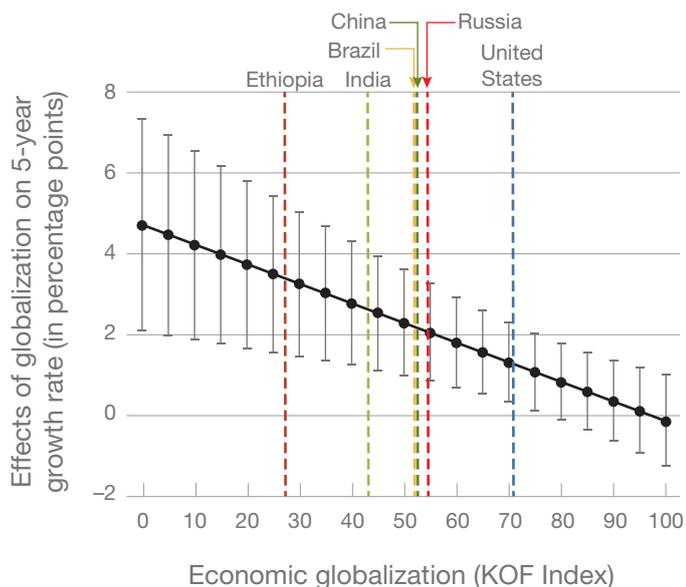
SOURCE: Data from World Bank, 2021.  
NOTE: PPP = purchasing power parity.

dinated by the World Health Organization (“World Health Organization Declares . . .,” 1998).<sup>5</sup>

The damage wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the persistence of inequities in America and the rest of the world, and the prevalence of poverty and conflicts notwithstanding, never before in history has such a large proportion of humanity lived so long or so relatively well (Pinker, 2012). The freer flow of goods, services, investment, people, and information across national borders has powered this growth (Frankel and Romer, 1999; Alcalá and Ciccone, 2004). Advances in technology have made such

movement cheaper and faster. International agreements have removed barriers to such exchanges. Many societies have shared in these gains. Some have advanced more quickly than others. In particular, countries that came late to industrialization and globalization have had an opportunity to grow faster than the average, albeit from a smaller base. Figure 2 shows how several emerging—that is, newly globalized—economies, including China, India, and Brazil, have grown at a faster rate than countries already globalized, such as the United States. The degree of economic globalization on the x-axis is measured by the widely used

FIGURE 2  
Countries Gaining Most from Globalization



SOURCE: “Chart of the Week: Distribution of Globalization’s Gains,” 2018; Lang and Tavares, 2018. Used with permission.

KOF Swiss Economic Institute’s Index of Globalization, a composite of eight key measures (see Gygli et al., 2016). The higher this index is for a country, as would be the case for more-mature globalized countries, the lower is the effect on its five-year growth rate. We discuss the implications of these dynamics for the United States in the next section.

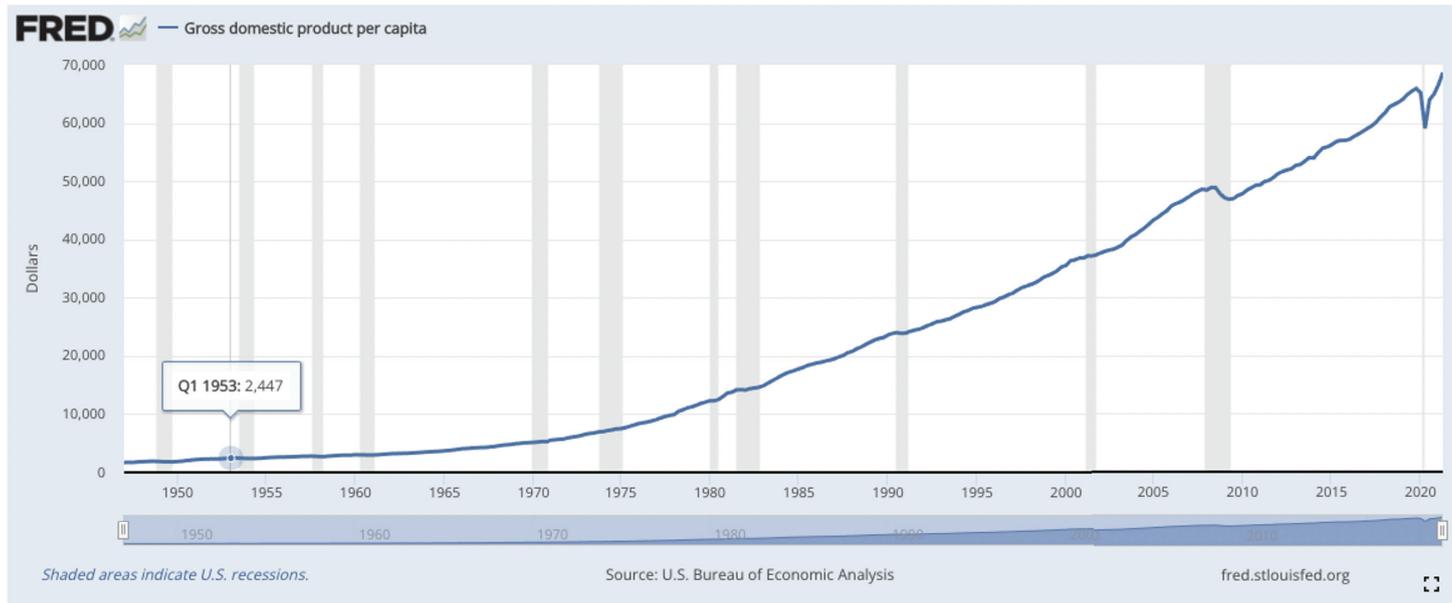
## Globalization from an American Perspective

Overall, it is easy to see how the United States has benefited from globalization. The nation has led the industrialized world in growth for most of the last 40 years. Figure 3 illustrates the relatively uninterrupted rise in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita the country has enjoyed over the last seven decades. In the world, its GDP in 2020 (in U.S. dollars) remains the highest at \$20.9 trillion, followed by China at \$14.7 trillion (World Bank, 2020a).

The United States is one of the largest recipients in the world of foreign direct investment—investment in a country from firms and individuals from other countries. In 2017, foreign direct investment supported 7.1 million U.S. jobs and more than \$60 billion in research and development spending (SelectUSA, 2018). Trade liberalization has increased American access to global markets and stimulated research and innovation. When producers have the whole world as their market, they can take advantage of greater economies of scale. For example, the North American Free Trade Agreement gave individual businesses unprecedented access to the regional market, raising exports from such states as Michigan and Pennsylvania to Canada and Mexico to record levels (Kengor, LaFaive, and Summers, 1999). Trade across the whole continent expanded from \$400 billion in 1990 to \$1.3 trillion in 2018 (George W. Bush Presidential Center, 2019). Globalization spurs innovation in product development and results in wider consumer choice at lower prices (International Monetary Fund, 2018).

So, why are many Americans feeling that they are being left behind and often blaming globalization? Accord-

FIGURE 3  
Rise in GDP per Capita Since 1975



SOURCES: Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez, and Gabriel Zucman, "Distributional National Accounts: Methods and Estimates for the United States," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 133, No. 2, May 2018, p. 579, by permission of Oxford University Press. Based on Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2021, based on U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

ing to data from the General Social Survey (Smith et al., 2019), even before the COVID-19 pandemic, American happiness had been in gradual decline for the past 25 years. The World Happiness Report's happiness index ranked the United States 19th (Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, 2019). Two surveys taken after the onset of COVID-19 found that Americans are less happy than at any time since the surveys started measuring happiness nearly 50 years ago and have less pride in their nation than at any time since Gallup started measuring that 20 years ago (Brooks, 2020).

This unhappiness has been reflected in a national move toward a degree of global disengagement. In the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, the winning candidate, Donald Trump, promised to build a wall across the entire southern border and ban all Muslims from entry to the United States. In 2017, the new President's national security and economic advisers, H. R. McMaster and Gary Cohn, wrote that "the world is not a 'global community,' but an arena where nations, nongovernmental actors and businesses engage and compete for advantage" (McMaster and Cohn,

2017). The United States then proceeded to withdraw from the Paris global climate agreement, the seven-nation agreement limiting Iran’s nuclear activities, and the UN Arms Trade Treaty. During the 2016 election and during his term, President Trump called into question the continued relevance of the transatlantic alliance; raised doubts about the durability of the U.S. commitment to Europe’s security; levied national security tariffs on products from allied countries; threatened withdrawal from the World Trade

Organization; cheered Britain’s exit from the European Union; and encouraged Germany to do the same, urging Chancellor Angela Merkel to negotiate a bilateral trade deal with the United States. As a result, the publics in Germany, France, and several other European countries came to regard the United States as a greater threat than Russia (Krumm et al., 2019).

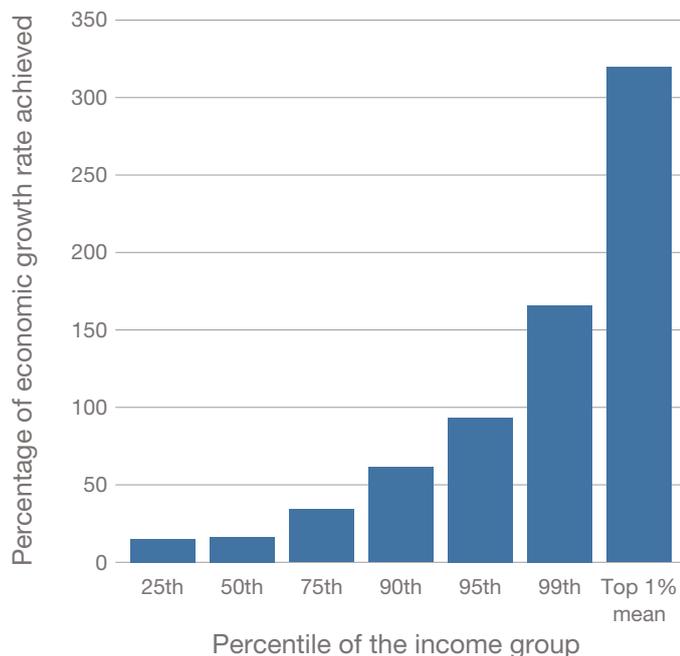
The Trump administration’s attitude toward U.S. stewardship of the global order held that, while the United States had been busy propping up the international system and safeguarding the global commons, its friends and adversaries had been taking unfair advantage by encroaching on U.S. markets and free riding on U.S. security guarantees. The time had come, therefore, to renegotiate America’s traditional commitments—those underpinning both the global trading system and the Western security architecture—and withdraw from them if it could strike better deals.

This attitude toward the global order that the United States has done so much to foster does not do justice to the immense benefits that the United States has realized as a result of globalization. However, one has to acknowledge that these gains have not been evenly distributed across the U.S. population. People tend to measure their well-being in relative rather than absolute terms. In recent decades, the benefits of U.S. economic growth have gone disproportionately to the wealthiest segment of society. As a result, in relative terms, the lower 90 percent of Americans have fallen behind their more well-to-do fellow citizens, the lower half of the population markedly so.

Figure 4 illustrates how income gains since 1980 have evolved in the United States across different percentile ranks. The per-capita GDP graph captures average income

FIGURE 4

### U.S. Income Gains by Percentile



SOURCE: Price and Edwards, 2021.

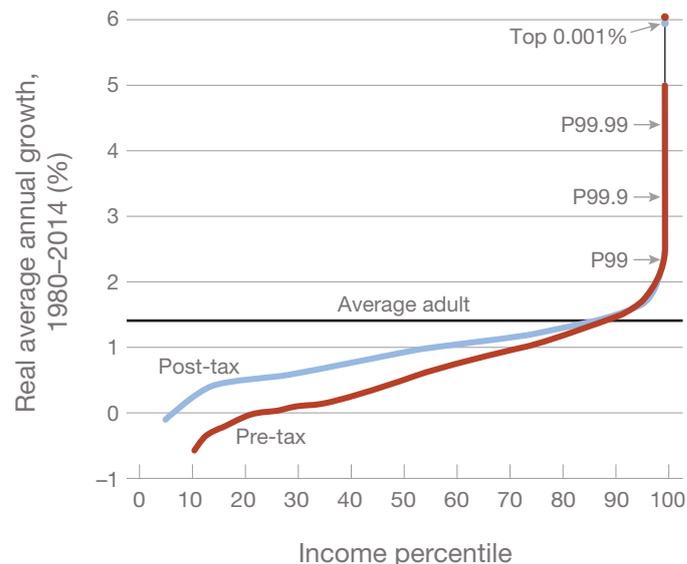
NOTE: Results are for full-time, year-round workers between ages 25 and 54 (see Table 2.b of the working paper on which this brief is based). Income is measured in 2018 dollars.

for the entire country. According to this figure, the top 0.01 percent experienced greater growth than any other income group, an order of magnitude higher than the economy as a whole, even compared with the rest of the top percentile. The rest of the top decile (91–99 percent) advanced at the same pace as the economy, while the remaining 90 percent of Americans did less well than the aggregate economy, mostly registering some absolute gains but with a diminishing share of the national pie.

Figure 5 illustrates this phenomenon in a different way, demonstrating that the top 1 percent gained disproportionately while the vast majority advanced more slowly than did the economy as a whole. As a result, wealth accumulation by the top 0.1 percent of Americans today has reached a level not seen in this country since the Roaring Twenties, about a century ago (Keshner, 2019). Progressive taxation and subsidies offset some of the disadvantages at the lower end of the economic spectrum, but this does not affect the basic picture of the gains being concentrated in the top percentiles. Despite aggregate growth for the country, improvements in living standards at the individual level appear to have stagnated for many over the past several decades.

The relative insecurity associated with these living standards is conveyed in the nearly 80 percent of Americans living paycheck to paycheck (CareerBuilder, 2017) and the two in five adults who cannot cover an unexpected expenditure of \$400 without selling or borrowing (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2018). The inequality along racial dimensions is also staggering. A Black family has one-tenth of the wealth of a white family, with Hispanic families not faring much better (McKernan et al., 2017). The median income of black households is less

FIGURE 5  
The Distribution of Economic Growth in the United States



SOURCE: Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez, and Gabriel Zucman, "Distributional National Accounts: Methods and Estimates for the United States," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 133, No. 2, May 2018, p. 579, by permission of Oxford University Press.

than 60 percent of that of white households. There are also substantial disparities along the lines of race in health care (Nelson, 2002). More recently, these income disparities have been reflected in differential rates of COVID-19 infection and death.

Social mobility in the United States also fares poorly compared with most other developed societies. Figure 6 plots income inequality against generational earning elasticity, which captures the dependence of earnings across generations (with a higher value denoting lower mobility),

FIGURE 6  
The Great Gatsby Curve



SOURCE: Perez-Arce et al., 2021.

among a sampling of counties. The United States has the greatest inequality among the countries shown, which goes along with the near-lowest social mobility. The American dream, moving up the social and income ladder from one generation to the next, has become out of reach for many Americans.

## American Attitudes Toward Global Citizenship

Although the data on American attitudes toward the composite concept of global citizenship are limited, there are

ample data on several of its component elements, including trade, immigration, international security, environmental sustainability, and global engagement in general.

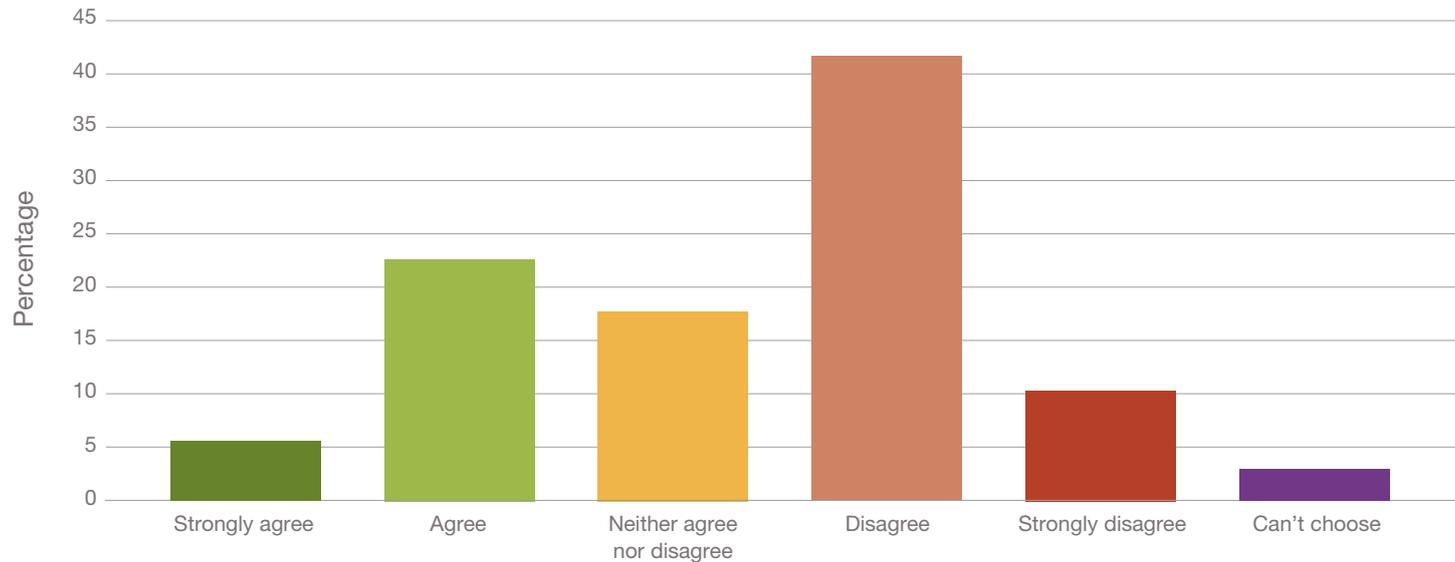
## Global Citizenship

Asked in the General Social Survey whether they agreed that “I feel more like a citizen of the world than any country,” the majority of American respondents replied in the negative, as seen in Figure 7.

This question illustrates a problem with collecting attitudes on global citizenship as a whole. Asking Americans to choose between the aspirational concept of global citizenship and the more established set of privileges and responsibilities derived from membership in an existing polity—that is, national citizenship—poses a false and unnecessary choice. “[I]f you believe you’re a citizen of the world,” former United Kingdom Prime Minister Theresa May declared to the 2016 Conservative Party Conference, “you’re a citizen of nowhere. You don’t understand what the very word ‘citizenship’ means” (May, 2016). Presented with an either-or choice, most Americans would seem to agree with the prime minister.

Nation-states are the fundamental building blocks of the modern international order. Most global challenges require concerted international action. Collective action at the global level is impossible without capable and willing states, especially the large and powerful ones, to create and implement agreements intended to address common challenges. Therefore, global citizenship should be seen as facilitating the advancement of internationally responsible national policies rather than as a choice of the world over country. Thus, Ursula von der Leyden, the President of the

FIGURE 7  
Americans Do Not See Citizenship of World over Country



SOURCE: Based on General Social Survey data from Smith et al., 2019.

European Commission, insists that nationalism and internationalism are not necessarily alternatives: “You can’t win against nationalism with internationalism. You need the nation, too” (Bennhold, 2019).

Given this difficulty of assessing opinions on the concept of global citizenship taken as a whole, we turn to American attitudes on the individual components.

## Trade

As discussed in the “Globalization from an American Perspective” section, globalization (which comprises the flow of goods, services, and capital) and technological change

(arising from both domestic innovation and the international flow of foreign innovations), add to national wealth and individual prosperity but not evenly and not for everyone. Some firms close and some people lose their jobs. For an advanced economy, such as that of the United States, job gains accrue in the higher-skilled sectors and losses in the lower-skilled ones. However, international trade alone cannot be held responsible for this. Domestically developed new technologies also substitute for labor. Lower-skilled jobs that are more susceptible to repetitive processes tend to be more subject to substitution. Therefore, technological change and innovation, by themselves or interacting with

globalization, favor high-skilled workers (Buera, Kaboski, and Rogerson, 2015).

However, innovation and technology arise naturally in a market democracy, such as that of the United States, through competitive forces and the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of the American people. The resulting pace of technological change is difficult to control or predict. It is also politically difficult to suppress innovation and be seen as antiprogress. Trade, which is more amenable to policy and political influence, therefore gets perceived as the sole

villain behind inequality, and restrictions on it become the focal point of attention and policy discussion.

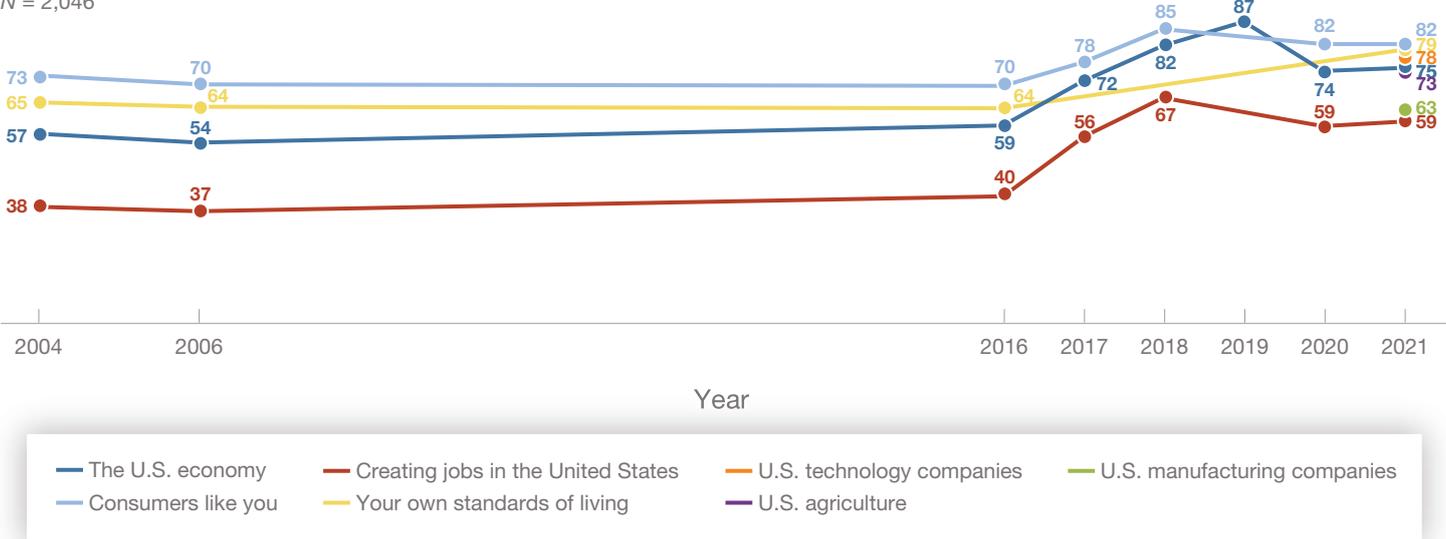
Yet, despite the aforementioned differential gains and the possibility of political manipulation, Figure 8 shows strong overall American support for international trade as a positive influence on consumers, the U.S. economy, and the U.S. job market.

Broad support for international trade, however, masks different perceptions of the factors affecting the decline of low-skilled jobs that is due to trade, particularly in manufacturing. Former U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Sum-

FIGURE 8  
American Support for International Trade Is Strong and Increasing

Overall, do you think trade is good or bad for: (%)

N = 2,046



SOURCE: Smeltz et al., 2021, p. 24. Used with permission.  
NOTE: Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

mers has observed that “every job loss that can be remotely connected to international trade, people do. So, this problem of invisible beneficiaries and very visible losers is one that bedevils the political economy of trade” (Summers, 2001). Concentrated large losses drive lobbying efforts to slow down trade, without commensurate countervailing efforts from the many who gain from trade, because each gains only to a small degree. Opinion is also divided across political affiliation. According to the 2017 Chicago Council Survey, 68 percent of Republicans think that trade and outsourcing are responsible for the job decline, while only 46 percent of Democrats think so (Smeltz et al., 2017). The situation is reversed when respondents were asked whether automation and mechanization are responsible for the jobs decline: 53 percent of Democrats think so, while only 29 percent of Republicans do (Smeltz et al., 2017). Interestingly, back in 2008, Republicans were more likely to think that trade created new jobs, while neither Democrats nor Republicans were more likely to think that it took jobs away. The Great Recession of 2008 has likely intensified the divergence in opinion.

## Immigration

As with trade, immigration adds to national wealth and individual prosperity, and there is little evidence that immigration significantly affects overall employment among native-born workers (Blau and Mackie, 2017). First- and second-generation immigrants founded 56 percent of the most highly valued technology companies (Meeker, 2018). One in four information technology workers in 2018 were immigrants (New American Economy Research Fund, 2019). The size of the workforce is a large factor in

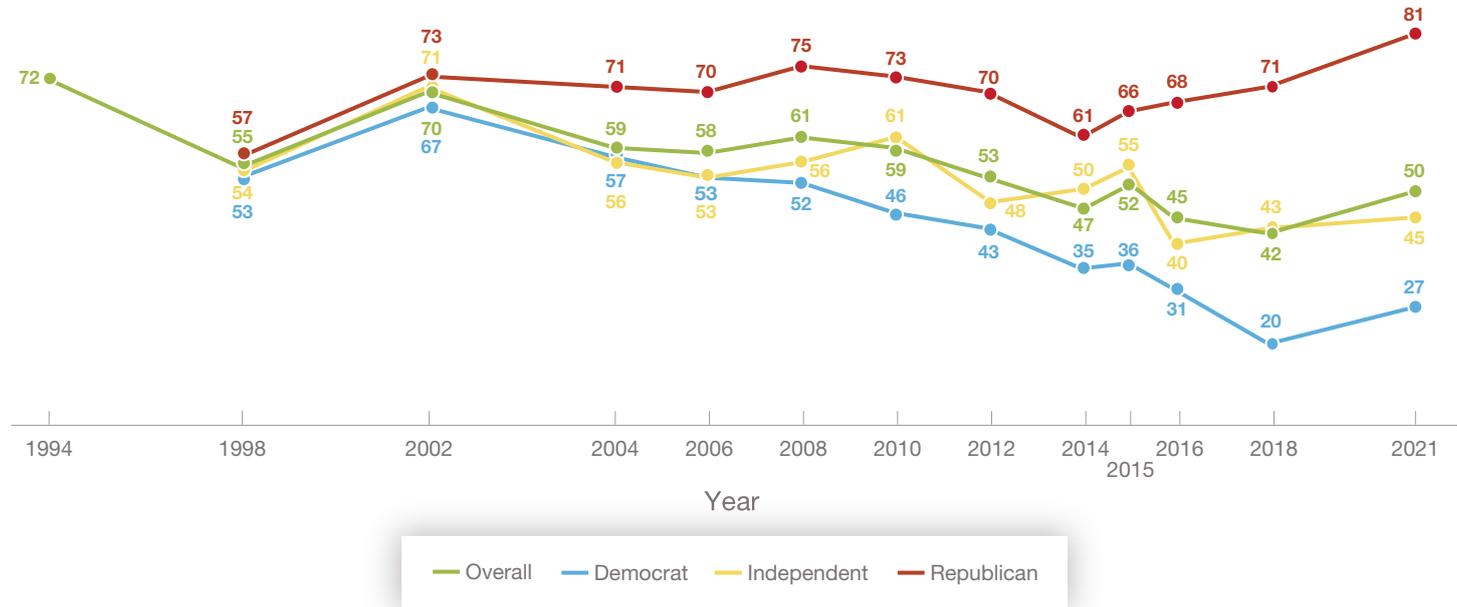
determining national economic growth. The number of working taxpayers is also key to funding education for the young and care for the elderly. The United States, with an otherwise aging population, would, in the absence of immigration, need to either increase taxes or decrease support to the young and old. Immigrants also offer a potential for reinvigorating declining towns, depending on whether local leaders and stakeholders respond to the demographic change with indifference or inclusiveness (Carr, 2008).

As Figure 9 shows, polling indicates that Americans’ concern about the flow of immigrants and refugees into the county over the past 20 years declined from 55 percent in 1998 to 43 percent in 2019. However, the same polling reveals a dramatically widening gap of nearly 60 percentage points between Republicans and Democrats on this issue.

A 2017 Pew Research study found that, among the 35 percent of Americans who favored building a new wall along the southern border, the most support came from individuals who live in rural and former industrial areas more than 350 miles from the border (Jones, 2017). Other studies in Europe have shown that perception of rather than actual proximity to immigration drives anti-immigrant sentiments (Clayton, Ferwerda, and Horiuchi, 2021). In some places, resistance to immigration is strongest among those with the least direct exposure to it (Piekut and Valentine, 2016). This suggests that, while studies point to immigrants contributing to the economy in job and business creation and taxes, perceptions of economic and social decline and, perhaps, cultural resistance feed hostility toward immigration even where immigrants are not directly competing for jobs in significant numbers.

FIGURE 9  
 Percentage of Americans Who View Immigration as a Critical Threat

N = 1,492



SOURCE: Smeltz et al., 2021, p. 33. Used with permission.

## Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

Although globalization has decreased mortality and poverty rates, increased economic growth and the variety of products, and improved prices, the resulting increases in production and consumption contribute to climate change, extreme weather, rising sea levels, and desertification and are a threat to the existence of as many as a million plant and animal species (Díaz et al., 2020). Although climate change is an outcome of globalization, dealing with it

requires global engagement, demonstrating the paradox of globalization, similar to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2014 Paris Agreement demonstrated a recognition among countries around the world that mitigating and adapting to climate change would require global coordination.

As Figure 10 shows, polling suggests that, since 1996, more than one-half of Americans have not only supported international action to address these threats but believe that international bodies should be empowered to enforce such agreements.

That there is broad support for international engagement to address global challenges, such as climate change, yet a national posture that could be opposed to it illustrates the critical need for more-widespread global citizenship and for steps to ensure that the benefits of globalization are shared more widely. A silent majority that benefits from trade can be overruled by a vocal minority that loses from it. Similarly, a lack of global engagement on the part of those who perceive a disadvantage can sideline America from global arrangements to address climate change, a major global challenge of our times that cannot be solved by individual actions alone.

## International Security

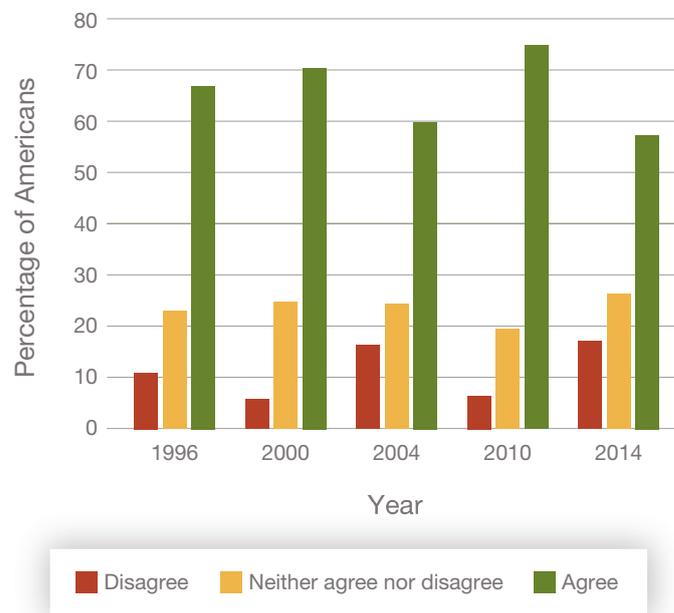
American support for its existing alliances took a dip after 2004, perhaps because of the controversies occasioned by the Iraq War, but has since recovered (see Figure 11). In fact, support across all groups is highest for 2017 among the years shown.

## Involvement in World Affairs

Figure 12 shows that a clear majority of Americans has consistently wanted to see the United States play an active role in world affairs. Support peaked just after September 11, 2001; declined slowly for the next few years, as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq stalemated; declined further after the 2008 recession; and began to rise again from 2014.

The poll data reflected in Figure 12 represents the extent rather than the intensity of opinions, and its subgrouping is limited to party affiliation. Therefore, the polls cannot account for the aforementioned power of an

FIGURE 10  
Percentage of Americans Who Agree that International Bodies or Agreements Should Be Used to Enforce Environmental Solutions



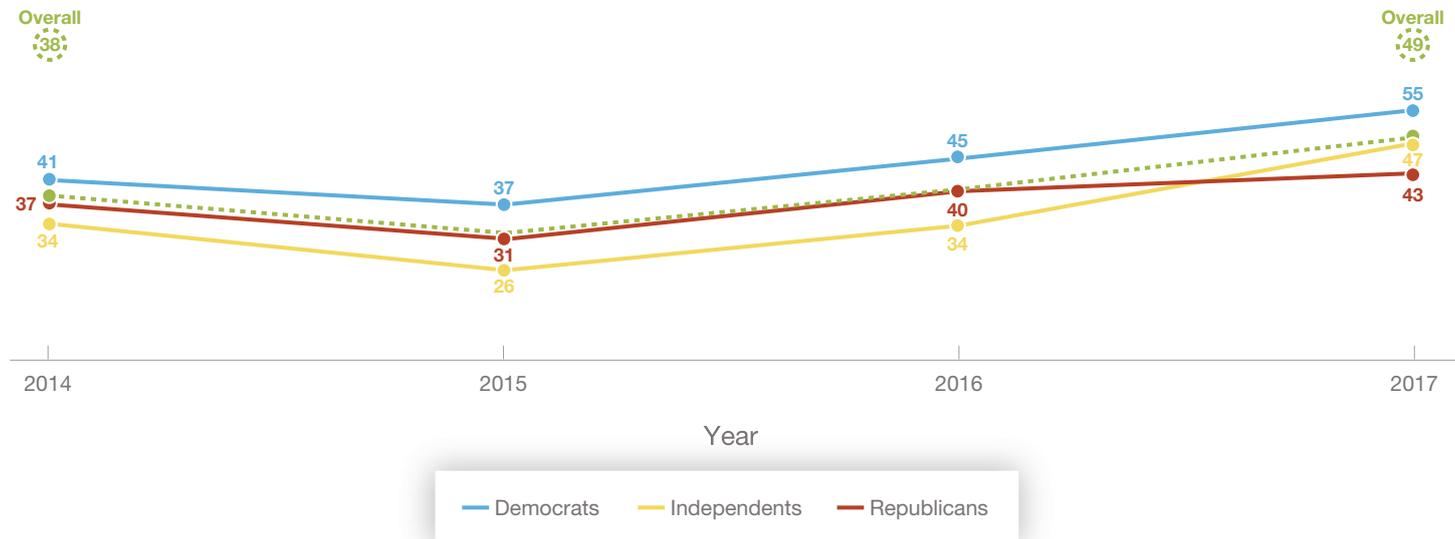
SOURCE: Based on General Social Survey data from Smith et al., 2019.

aroused and organized minority to shape policy in opposition to the more-weakly held preferences of the majority. Research from the Center for American Progress (CAP), a progressive think tank linked to the Democratic Party, actually presents a different categorization of the U.S. electorate in terms of its support for global engagement (Halpin et al., 2019). Using its survey findings, CAP groups one-third of voters into the Trump nationalist category (heavily Republican and in favor of military spending and against immigration, these voters likely constitute much of

FIGURE 11  
American Attitudes Toward Maintaining Existing Alliances

How effective do you think each of the following approaches is to achieving the foreign policy goals of the United States: **Maintaining existing alliances** (% very effective)

N = 2,020



SOURCE: Smeltz et al., 2017, p. 10. Used with permission.

the vocal anti-globalization minority we have mentioned throughout), a little less than one-fifth into the traditional internationalist category (older, from both parties, and strongly committed to U.S. leadership in the world), just less than three-tenths into the global activist category (heavily liberal, well-educated, supportive of diplomacy and cooperative global actions), and a little more than one-fifth into the foreign policy disengaged category (younger, less educated, and apathetic to international developments and foreign policy). By this grouping, internationalists and globalists combined form a plurality of American voters

but not, in contrast with the Chicago Council surveys, a majority. The nationalist group is smaller than the internationalists and globalists combined, while the uninterested and uninformed represent the swing bloc.

## Advancing Global Citizenship Among Americans

Without necessarily adopting the term, Americans acted as good global citizens on the whole throughout the second

half of the 20th century, supporting policies that expanded trade, encouraged legal immigration, welcomed refugees, provided humanitarian and development aid, and promoted international security. Over the past two decades, these internationalist policies have come under mounting domestic pressure, a likely reaction to setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Great Recession of 2008, and rising income inequality. Although most Americans continue to support constructive global engagement, U.S. policy has

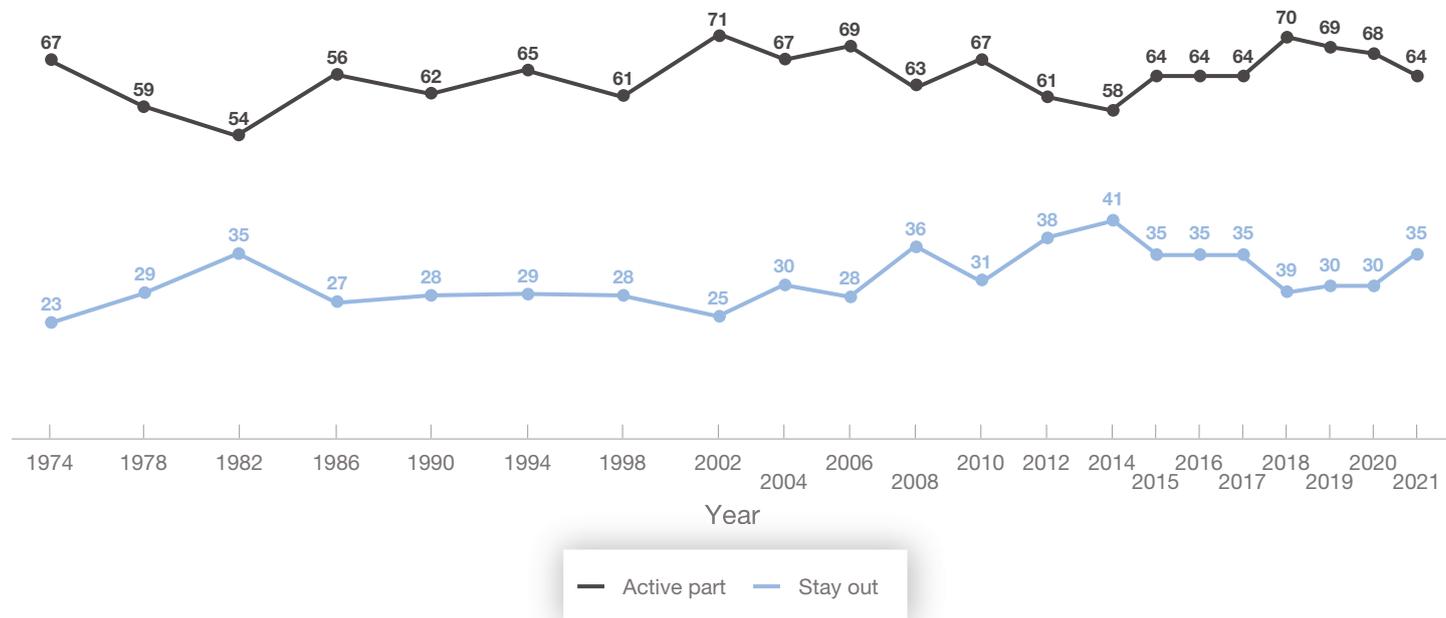
been disproportionately affected by a vocal minority of those who have felt themselves negatively affected by these policies.

COVID-19 may simply strengthen populist, nationalist, antiestablishment, and anti-globalist trends in U.S. policy, but it is premature to assume such an outcome. We are only beginning to learn which national and global responses will be validated and which will be found wanting, how long the pandemic will last, and when the

FIGURE 12

### American Support for U.S. Involvement in World Affairs, by Political Affiliation

Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs? (%)  
 N = 2,086



SOURCE: Smeltz et al., 2021, p. 8. Used with permission.  
 NOTE: Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

economy will recover. International action will be essential in ending the pandemic, rebuilding the economy, and preventing future pandemics. The Great Depression gave rise to the New Deal. World War II gave rise to the Marshall Plan. COVID-19 has already caused a loss of American lives larger than have the wars since 1945. Although COVID-19 does not appear to have caused as prolonged a downturn, we cannot assess the long-term impact on American opinion toward global engagement and policy with any assurance until we know how the pandemic ends.

Despite these challenges, as argued earlier, globalization has been largely beneficial both for Americans and the world, decreasing poverty, increasing well-being and innovation, and leading to the greater peace that comes from the interdependence of countries. And as the pandemic shows, even the downsides of globalization—climate change, environmental depredation, refugee flows, cross-border terrorism, crime, and disease—all require multinational solutions. Global citizenship will be most effectively exercised by advocating globally responsible national policies because addressing these challenges is of enormous interest to Americans, as it is to the rest of the world. It is therefore beneficial to advance global citizenship among Americans.

We suggest three complementary approaches to expanding the size and influence of an internationally minded constituency in the United States:

- Work to mobilize and unite those who are in favor of global engagement and citizenship to begin with (CAP's traditional internationalists and global activists).

- Employ education to shrink the number of those apathetic to international issues (CAP's internationally disengaged segment).
- Introduce measures to reduce income disparity and give members of the disaffected camp (CAP's nationalists) a larger stake in the benefits that flow from an open and cooperative global order.

## Consolidating the Internationalist Constituencies

Advancing a globally responsible agenda among Americans requires consolidating support among those who are global citizens motivated by self-interest, at least in part (roughly corresponding to CAP's traditional internationalists) and those for whom altruism is a stronger motivating factor (broadly, CAP's global activists). The former group focuses its concerns on national security and economic growth and responds to appeals for U.S. leadership in addressing common challenges. The latter group tends to be more concerned about climate change and global poverty and is more comfortable with multilateral institutions. The global interests the groups share can prevail in setting U.S. policy only if the two act in conjunction. Internationalist constituencies in both major parties face difficulties in uniting unless they prioritize the economic and foreign policy issues that could unite them over the issues that divide them. This will be more feasible if leaders govern from the center and if parties compete for the undecided voters rather than concentrate exclusively on mobilizing their bases.

## Promoting Global Education

U.S. actions have global significance and repercussions regardless of whether they steer toward an isolationist or an interventionist path. Trying to deal with the consequent issues as a democracy composed of ever-more-diverse constituencies requires U.S. citizens to understand the links between the national and the international. An extensive literature already promotes global citizenship in the fields of education and political science. The UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Oxfam Education, and Soka University are among the more-prominent organizations promoting global citizenship education (GCE), the last of which was founded amidst a rise of Japanese nationalism in the early 1900s. GCE seeks to build competencies in critical thinking and problem solving, empathy, conflict resolution, security, shared universal values (human rights, peace, justice, etc.), respect for intercultural and diverse understanding, and recognition of global issues.

In the United States, three globally relevant subjects—civics, world history, and international relations—are currently regarded as very distinct disciplines. Exposure to the third is limited to specialized higher-education programs. These three fields should be taught in a more integrated fashion and beginning at a younger age. International relations, in particular, should not be confined to higher education.

Internationalization efforts in education mainly involve study abroad and recruiting international students (Helms, Brajkovic, and Struthers, 2017). About 10.9 percent of all undergraduate students study abroad at some point in their undergraduate careers (Redden, 2018), and international students made up 5.5 percent of the U.S. higher

education population in 2019 (Institute of International Education, 2019). This, however, limits the beneficiaries to the few who get to participate and the people they might talk to about their experiences. GCE activities can also happen outside the education system. Supporting public education and campaigns and supporting more opportunities for Americans to engage with international issues can also provide opportunities. For example, the Peace Corps has had 235,000 Americans serve in 141 countries since its establishment in 1961. Its mission includes promoting better understanding “of Americans on the part of the peoples served” and “of other peoples on the part of Americans” (Peace Corps, undated). Encouraging the participation of a larger proportion and broader array of Americans in short-term assignments in the military, foreign service,

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voluntary service, or other forms of exchange could also present opportunities for GCE, broadly conceived.

Those who do not attend school beyond high school may have the greatest need for a more globally informed education. In the United States, primary and secondary school curricula are controlled by elected state and local officials. State legislators and school board members are not going to authorize studies they themselves do not believe in. Instituting large-scale instruction in global affairs, therefore, needs to go hand in hand with efforts to persuade the older generations of the relevance and value of such studies.

Advances in communication have resulted in freer flows of information and democratized participation in public forums but have also created misinformation and cyber threats. Interactive tools to combat misinformation are being developed that consumers can apply while browsing the web and consuming information (Kavanagh et al., 2020). One possible way to communicate the benefits of diversity would be to use psychology's contact hypothesis theory, which suggests that contact between members of different groups can effectively reduce prejudice between majority and minority members. In Victoria, Australia, a

government initiative used a similar idea to promote visuals with the faces of residents of different races working in non-stereotypical occupations in the community to create cognitive dissonance and diminish long-held prejudices (e.g., Victorian Government, 2019).

### **Sharing the Benefits of Globalization More Widely**

Although our analyses indicate that a majority of Americans support openness and involvement in world affairs, a Gallup poll conducted in 2020 shows that voter priorities are spread across several areas, with foreign affairs and trade ranking as least important (Hrynowski, 2020). It is well established that loss aversion is a greater motivator than the prospect of a comparable gain. Those who benefit from trade, immigration, and other aspects of globalization are unlikely to voice their support as vigorously as those who believe themselves to be the losers. Low overall voter turnout among Americans makes strongly held minority opinions more likely to prevail. Consequently, for example, both the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates in 2016 pledged to withdraw the country from the

then-recently concluded Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade agreement because of well-organized resistance from minority constituencies active in both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Most resistance to openness and support for protectionist measures comes from a core minority that feels negatively affected by foreign trade and immigration. Even when unemployment was at historical lows with a subdued inflation rate, this group faced economic insecurity, and its losses were large and concentrated (Jacobson, LaLonde, and Sullivan, 2005). The COVID-19 pandemic will only compound this situation.

Solutions are needed to increase inclusivity, help smooth individual losses, and ensure that more can avail themselves of the benefits. Educational campaigns and behavioral interventions will not be enough to convert those who do not find globalism working for them. However, anti-globalization policies, such as tariffs and stronger border controls, are not likely to provide permanent solutions. These are more likely to preserve costly and less-innovative firms that hurt the economy, workers, and consumers in the long run.

Markets and governments can be viewed as complements, and governments can play a role in addressing the disruption inherent to globalization (Rodrik, 2011, p. 368). Improving safety nets, investing in market-relevant workforce development and retraining programs, and expanding trade adjustment assistance (TAA) are important complementary options for globalization. U.S.-based firms rank in the middle among advanced economies for employee-sponsored training but rank particularly low in such areas as apprenticeship and occupational training for younger workers (Lerman, 2016). In addition, the United

States spent less than 0.05 percent of its GDP in 2011 on programs that directly help people find work, one-tenth of what some western European countries spent, such as Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Finland (Martin, 2015). Since then, the number has increased to 0.2 percent, and only narrow groups of the unemployed qualify for these programs (Alden and Strauss, 2016).

TAA is meant to redistribute the benefits of trade by allowing workers to be compensated in transitioning to new jobs when current job losses can be attributed to trade. Under TAA programs, workers can qualify for additional weeks of income support beyond standard state unemployment, continued health insurance benefits, wage insurance, job search allowances, and retraining. In 2019, 77 percent of TAA participants obtained new employment within six months of completing the program. While 53 percent arrived from the manufacturing industry, 62 percent were successfully reemployed in other sectors (Employment and Training Administration, 2019). Experts suggest that TAA programs could be strengthened or expanded. For

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example, participation has been low among eligible workers because many workers are unaware of the program and because of the difficulty of identifying and targeting the winners and losers (Jacobson, LaLonde and Sullivan, 2005; Autor et al., 2014; D’Amico and Schochet, 2012; Government Accountability Office, 2020). In addition, automation, not trade, is sometimes a factor in job displacement. Compensatory programs, such as TAA, should also be considered for those displaced by technological change.

More-progressive tax rates could reduce the disparity between winners and relative losers arising from automation, trade, and immigration. Designing an optimal system to mitigate losses from trade and technological change is beyond the scope of this Perspective; rather, our aim is to emphasize that, to foster global citizenship, one needs to make those who have fallen behind from globalization amenable to it in the first place by addressing their concerns and losses.

## Conclusion

Globalization is the collective choice of the more than 7 billion of the world’s peoples. As Nayan Chanda eloquently wrote, “Calls to shut down globalization are pointless because nobody is in charge” (Chanda, 2008). It might not even be an option for America to walk away from the globalized world. Global citizenship can facilitate the institution of policies that seek to maximize the benefits of globalization while minimizing the attendant disruption.

Arthur C. Brooks, former president of the American Enterprise Institute, a conservatively inclined Washington think tank, recently made the case for globalization (and free-market capitalism, which gives rise to it) by invoking a

Democratic president but also urged for more-progressive social policies. After noting the reductions in global poverty and infant mortality and the rise in literacy, he wrote:

What explains this amazing progress? Globalization, free trade, the proliferation of property rights and the rule of law, and the culture of democratic capitalism spreading around the world. As President Barack Obama, not known as a conservative dogmatist, put it in 2015, the “free market is the greatest producer of wealth in history—it has lifted billions of people out of poverty” (Obama, 2015).

Some will counter that the free market is not enough, that millions are still left out of capitalism’s bounty (including in the United States) and others are getting rich through exploitation. And they’re right: Too many have been excluded while others have taken unfair advantage. Free enterprise can be distorted by the powerful, whether through corporate cronyism or the complicated web of social advantages protected by the wealthy.

But that fact is not an argument to roll capitalism back; it is an argument for sharing its benefits more widely (Brooks, 2019).

As those active in both the Democratic and Republican parties have articulated, sharing the benefits of globalization more widely may prove to be the most effective means of advancing global citizenship among Americans and realizing the benefits that accrue from that.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In an alternative definition, Oxfam International characterizes a *global citizen* as someone who is aware of the wider world, has a sense of their own role as a world citizen, participates in community, respects and values diversity, is outraged by social injustice, and is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place (Oxfam Education, undated). Our conception of global citizenship has a few parallels with this definition but puts greater emphasis on enlightened self-interest as a motivating factor. Shatz and Shlapak, 2016, elaborates on why the global system of security and economic institutions has been good for America.

<sup>2</sup> Arnade, 2019, examines the economic, social, and cultural landscape of back-row Americans, who have not had access to education and other career-enhancing opportunities and have therefore been left behind by globalization and its successes.

<sup>3</sup> There are concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic will reverse this trend.

<sup>4</sup> *Infant mortality* refers to the share of children dying before the age of 5; *maternal mortality* refers to the share of pregnant women dying while pregnant or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy.

<sup>5</sup> This is a great example of U.S. global engagement that benefited the United States (Henderson and Klepac, 2013).

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## About This Perspective

Although *globalization* describes the effects of increasing international openness and interdependence, *global citizenship* describes a mode of dealing with this phenomenon, harvesting its benefits, and working collaboratively to deal with its challenges. Globalization has enriched societies materially, culturally, and intellectually—although these gains have not been distributed uniformly—and has also disrupted long-standing economic, political, and social arrangements, sometimes painfully.

In this Perspective, the authors examine the evolution of American attitudes toward globalization and various forms of international engagement. Concerted international action is required to tackle the shared challenges of climate change, environmental sustainability, pandemic disease, international security, and economic growth. This kind of collective action requires a degree of solidarity among people across national boundaries, a sense of common destiny, and shared responsibility as expressed in the concept of global citizenship. It also requires that these attitudes be reflected in national policies because nation-states are, and will continue to be, the essential building blocks of any world order. The authors therefore address why global citizenship is important, how it can be fostered, and how Americans consider and value global issues. The authors also explore ways of promoting global citizenship across the political spectrum.

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